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FRANK LESLIE'S
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Minnie's Rescue from the Wilds of Siberia; Or, the Daring Adventures of Two Boys.

By ROGER STARBUCK.

CHAPTER I.

THE RESCUE.

ON the morning of the 22d of August, 18—, a terrific gale was raging in the Okhotsk Sea.

The vast expanse of ocean, whitened by foam and covered with flying clouds of spray, flung its surges high in the air and roared as if whole legions of fierce lions were chained in its bosom.

A small, neat-looking schooner, of yacht-like build, but carrying top-sails on both masts, had entered the sea a few days before, and was now tossing wildly about among the lofty waves.

She was a beautifully modeled craft, painted black, with the exception of a white stripe on each side, and a little tastefully executed gilt-work on her bow and stern. The latter, which was rounding, contained long, oval windows, with blinds of a walnut-color, just beneath which was traced her name—*The Swallow*—also in gilt.

She had a clean white deck, her wheel-spokes were inlaid with brass and ivory, her tall, tapering masts were as smooth as glass, and every time she rolled, going over almost upon her beam-ends in the heavy seas, she revealed a shining, neatly-coppered bottom.

Forward she carried a small brass nine-pounder, and one of the same size on each side, amidships, the three guns being now carefully covered with tarpaulin to protect them from the spray and the water.

On her quarter, to larboard and starboard, hung two long boats with sharp bows, built both for strength and speed, and there was also a small gig—a mere cockle-shell—hanging over the stern.

At present the only sail she carried was a close-reefed foretopsail and staysail, under which she lay to, plunging bows under at times and shipping whole avalanches of water, that drenched to the skin the few men on deck.

These men, young fellows ranging from eighteen to twenty-five, well-formed, with a clear, healthy color showing through their brown skins, were evidently English sailors.

In fact, the schooner had been built by a London ship-carpenter in San Francisco, to be afterward purchased by her present owner and captain, Brian Lewis, a mere youth of eighteen, belonging to Dover, England.

Both the captain and the mate were now on the quarterdeck.

The former was a handsome boy, with light-brown hair, clear blue eyes, good complexion, and a certain look of determination—of dogged resolution and "off hand" daring—which gave to him an air of manliness beyond his years.

He had a good, strong, active frame, very broad about the shoulders, full in the chest, and tapering off at the hips.

At the present time he wore a round fur hat, a shaggy bearskin coat and high boots. About his waist was a broad belt, in which was thrust a long knife, with a handsomely carved handle.

The mate, a few years older, was a squarely-built, weather-beaten sailor, whom the captain had engaged to go with him at San Francisco.

He stood not far off, with a glass raised to his eye, and pointed off the lee quarter.

"How now, Mr. Bend?" inquired the youth, as he walked toward the officer. "How do you make her out?"

"By jingo?" ejaculated Bend.

"What is it?"

"Well, sir, now the fog has lifted, she's no sloop, after all; nothing but a boat."

"How?—a boat in this sea?"

"Yes, sir; I can see her plain now."

The young captain took the glass and directed it toward the object.

"Some whaler's boat, if I'm not mistaken," he remarked, after a brief survey, "and I say, Bend, God help her! She's been stoven—I can see her broken gunwale, and the oars, which they have lashed together and spread out to save themselves from sinking. They will be lost."

"Yes, sir, they are doomed. A good boat could not live long in such a sea. The Lord have mercy upon them!"

"I can see her colors," continued Lewis. "They are the Stars and Stripes. She has hoisted them as a signal."

"Ay, sir, and little good that signal will do her now. She will be swamped in a few minutes."

The boat alluded to was not more than a mile off.

With stoven gunwale and half-broken bow, her oars stretching out on each side, her signal waving from the stern, there she was, pitching and tumbling amongst the tumultuous seas, which threatened every moment to overwhelm her. She contained four men, one of whom, a tall, slender personage, was plying the steering-oar with a skillful hand, which, however, it was evident could not long prevent the threatened calamity.

At one moment the frail boat, as it disappeared in a hollow

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between the seas, would vanish from Brian's sight; then again it would reappear on the crest of a wave, its occupants all shouting and gesticulating to those aboard the schooner.

"Too bad," said Bend. "They want us to help them, but they do not stop to think that we cannot do it in such a gale."

"We must do it!" said Brian.

Mr. Bend stared.

"No boat could live in such a sea, sir."

"I am not so sure of that. The risk is worth running, at any rate."

At that moment there came a blast of wind more furious than any that preceded it. It struck the schooner on her weather-bow and threw her over fairly on her beam-ends.

A huge wall of water broke over her at the same moment, compelling all on board to cling firmly to ropes and pins, to save themselves from being washed away.

The little craft staggered for a full minute, and seemed about to capsize; then she righted, with every timber creaking and straining.

"Talk of saving those people," gasped the mate, as he shook the water from his garments. "We could never do it, sir, in such a blow."

"Clear away that larboard boat!" rang out the voice of the young captain.

The men looked surprised, but they bounded aft and promptly cast the fall ropes from the pins.

"Too late," said Bend, mournfully, to Brian. "Look, sir, the boat is gone now."

The young captain sprang upon the rail, clutching the rigging, and ran his gaze over the wild waters.

"No, by George, not yet!" he cried. "Lower away, there!"

The mate, looking in the direction he pointed out, beheld the whaleboat, now overturned, on the crest of a sea with the men clinging to it.

The schooner's boat was being lowered, and Brian had sprung toward the rail to enter it, when the mate interposed.

"For God's sake, sir, stand back and let me go in your stead! Remember your mission up here. If you should be lost, your sister would never be rescued."

"Get back, Tom Bend," answered Brian, goodhumoredly. "Don't worry about me. I have handled a boat, I think, in as bad a sea as this."

"Better let me go, sir."

"No, Tom, stay aboard. I'll be back in good time for dinner."

The boat struck the water, in bundled the crew of six men, and Brian took his place in the sternsheets.

The boat was quickly and dexterously cast off.

The young captain then seized the tiller.

"Give way!" was the order, and the boat swept past the schooner with lightning rapidity.

Brian kept her head to the sea.

She was a good boat, but so thick was the spray and so violent the seas, that she was in a few minutes half full of water.

The bailer went to work, while the young captain kept a keen lookout for the wrecked boat.

For some minutes he was unable to see her; then all at once she appeared in sight, not twenty fathoms off.

The four men still clung to her—clung with a despairing grip, their eyes bulging from their sockets, every nerve strained to the utmost to maintain their hold.

"Hold on, my friends, hold on hard!" roared Brian, applying his speaking-trumpet to his mouth. "We will soon reach you."

"For God's sake, be quick!" cried one of the castaways.

"Pull, men, pull; strong and steady!" said Brian.

The men did their best, but so rough was the water that they had much difficulty in dipping their oars and in keeping them from being snapped asunder.

"A few more strokes," continued the youth. "Only a few more!"

As he spoke a cross-sea took the boat's quarter and poured over her.

The young captain was actually washed over the gunwale, but he clutched it and hung on.

Then the boat swung off and was very nearly swamped.

In fact, it must have rolled over, but for the activity of the young commander, who flung himself back to his place and seized the tiller just in time to save the craft.

Taking off his drenched cap, with his wet hair waving on the wind, as if nothing had happened Brian shouted:

"Cheerily, lads! pull ahead!"

The boat was now close to the overturned one, to which the castaways clung.

Lifted on the crest of a sea, she was suddenly swept toward the capsized vessel.

As she descended Brian shifted his helm a little and glided alongside of her.

In a few seconds the four whalers were helped aboard the boat.

The long, lank seaman grasped Brian's hand and thanked him warmly.

Ten minutes later the schooner, which Bend had headed for the boat, arrived alongside.

A rope was caught by the sailors in the boat, and the tackles were soon hooked on, after which the craft was quickly hoisted up to its place, its occupants having climbed to the schooner's deck.

The tall man of the castaways stated that he was the captain—that he had lowered for whales just before the gale, and lost sight of his ship.

Brian took him below, while the others went forward amongst the crew, by whom they were well treated to such refreshments as could be procured for them.

The cabin of the schooner was neatly furnished.

"It's like a little parlor," said Captain Marble—the name of the castaway—as soon as he had put on the dry garments which Brian had ordered his steward to procure for him.

"Yes, it is fitted for a lady's accommodation."

"Your wife?"

"No, I meant my sister."

"Is she aboard?"

"She is not, but I came up here on purpose to rescue her—to get her aboard."

"To rescue her?"

"Yes," answered Brian, with difficulty repressing a smile at the persevering inquisitiveness of the captain.

"How so? Is she in the hands of Injuns, or what?"

"She is in the hands of a rascal—a Russian trader."

"Hah! you don't like the Rooshes, I guess," said Captain Marble.

"Whether I liked them as a nation or not," answered Brian, "I am certain that I could never like John Loiski!"

"He has not married your sister?"

"No, but I expect he will want to force her to marry his son against her will."

"Well, now, how did it all come about?" inquired Captain Marble.

"When my sister was three and five years old, we lost our father, a naval officer. My mother had died two years previously. John Loiski was my mother's half-brother. He was in London at the time my father died, and he insisted on taking my sister away with him to Siberia, where he had a trading-house with a good business. My sister did not want to go, nor did I wish to be separated from her. But in spite of all our entreaties, he took her with him. I did not hear from her after that until about eighteen months since, when she contrived to send me a letter from Nerchinsk, where she was at the time. In this letter she stated that her uncle treated her harshly because she would not take to his son, Peter, whom he seems he wants her to marry. He watched her closely, that she might not write to me, but she contrived to send off this letter by a Polish exile on an English vessel that chanced to enter the Amour River. She stated that the tyrant gave her no peace of her life, that he sometimes even threatened to strike her, while his son, Peter, has sworn that he will shoot her if she does not soon consent to wed him. The letter was dated Nerchinsk, but she stated that her uncle talked of taking her away from there, either to Okhotsk or Petropavlovsk."

"And you have come up here on purpose to look for her and rescue her?"

"I have."

"One thing I will say, which is that you are a good sailor for your years. Your craft is in shipshape order, and I wish you success."

"Ay, I am something of a sailor," answered Brian. "A friend of my father's took me to sea with him aboard his sloop-of-war, and he taught me navigation and seamanship. Arrived in San Francisco, I bought this schooner for the purpose I have spoken of."

"But how do you know where to look for your sister? She may still be at Nerchinsk."

"I will find her though she be at the other end of the world," said Brian, firmly.

"I don't doubt it, but it would be easier if you could only take her bearings."

"I feel pretty sure that she is either in Petropavlovsk or in Okhotsk."

"Ay, ay, but which of the two?" said Captain Marble.

"It does not matter much. If I cannot find her in one I will in the other."

"I am not so sure of that. At either of those places you might be snapped up."

"I don't understand."

"What! you don't mean to say that you haven't heard of the war?"

"The news?"

"Ay, ay. Rooshy's agin England. War was declared some months ago."

This was, indeed, news to Brian.

"Are you sure?" he said.

"Yes; had it direct from a Russian mail-steamer, bound from Sandwich Islands to the coast. I spoke her two weeks ago."

"I am glad you told me, as I should otherwise have run my head into a hornet's nest," said Brian. "I am now puzzled to know where to go first to search for my unhappy sister."

"Humph!" ejaculated Marble, who had for some time been looking keenly at the youth. "I don't know—all rather queer, though, that I can help you."

"In what way, sir?"

"Have you a likeness of your sister that you can show me?"

"I have."

The youth then took a small miniature from his breastpocket, as he spoke, and showed it to the whaler.

"Ay, ay!" cried Marble; "there you are! It's the face of a child you show me, and yet it is like the one I saw—now, that of a young lady of fifteen years old."

"That is nearly my sister's age. You have seen her?"

"Ay, sir; you see, we whalers go almost everywhere. Only two weeks ago I touched at the town of Okhotsk, and there I saw the face in that picture as it would look now. Besides that, the face resembles yours."

"You have seen her!—you saw my sister at Okhotsk! Where was she?"

"She and an elderly man came and stood on a rock, not a ship's length from us, and looked at our vessel. They were there about twenty minutes, so that we had a good chance to see them."

Brian grasped the captain's hand.

"A thousand thanks for your information!" he said. "Now I shall know where to go and how to act."

"Better be keerful! Them 'Rooshes' might spoil all your plans!"

"I shall be on the lookout."

"That's right, and let me tell you that I shall be on the lookout, too, to help you all I can, if I ever get on board my tub of a craft again."

"I shall endeavor to find your vessel and put you aboard."

"She can't be far away," said Marble. "I trust we will see her as soon as the weather clears. In case you should get into trouble, as I'm afraid you will, and want a friend to pick you up, I hope I shall be fortunate enough to see you."

As he spoke the captain drew from his breastpocket the small American flag, which had been used as a signal in the whaleboat.

This flag was of peculiar shape, being cut in the form of a diamond.

"If ever you get into trouble," he continued, presenting the flag, "and show this, you may be sure that I'll spare no pains to reach you if I see it."

"Thank you," said the youth, as he received the signal.

Soon after, dinner was put on the table.

The captain, who had not tasted food for many hours, did full justice to the meal.

"We don't get such good pickings aboard our whalers," he remarked, when he had finished.

A few hours later the gale abated and the weather cleared.

Not a league distant lay a ship, carrying three boats.

"There she is," said Captain Marble, rubbing his hands. "That's my craft, the old *Sea-Wolf*, of New Bedford."

Brian ran down to the vessel, and the captain and his men were soon pulled aboard.

The two vessels kept along for a short distance together and then separated.

"Now for Okhotsk!" said Brian.

All sail was made upon the schooner, and she went bowling merrily along over the bright sunlit waters of the Siberian coast.

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUNG CASTAWAY.

THE information the young English captain had received from Marble regarding the commencement of the Crimean war caused him to station at each masthead a good man on the lookout for any of the enemy's vessels which might happen to be cruising in those waters.

He also summoned the whole of his crew of fifteen men on deck, and set them to exercising with cutlasses, pikes and small arms, with which he had well provided his craft, as there had been some prospect of war before he left San Francisco.

The three nine-pounders were also carefully overhauled and examined, to make sure they were in good order.

True, Brian, in his small vessel, with only fifteen men, could not expect to do much in the way of fighting; nevertheless, he was determined to do all in his power in case he was attacked.

The schooner had made good headway, when, in the afternoon, the voice of the man on the lookout was heard.

"Something on the water ahead; looks like a piece of a wreck!"

Brian had his glass to his eye in a moment.

"Ay, ay; a piece of a wreck—a spar, I should say, and it looks as if there's some one on it."

He passed the glass to Bend.

"You are right, sir," said the mate. "It is either a live person or a dead one! No, by Jingo!" he suddenly added, "he is alive, whoever he may be. I can see him wave his arms to us!"

As the vessel drew yet nearer to the object, it could be plainly seen with the naked eye—a broken maintopmast with a boy or man clinging to it.

When still nearer, the person was discovered to be a youth, apparently of seventeen or eighteen.

Brian now hailed aback the foretopsail and lowered his boat.

He was soon alongside of the wreck.

The occupant smiled as he unlashed himself from the spar, and was assisted into the boat.

He was a fine-looking boy of eighteen, with dark eyes and complexion, tall and vigorous for his age.

He was attired in a semi-nautical suit, which neatly fitted his handsome limbs, while a dark cap of velvet pushed back from his brow showed a broad, intelligent forehead.

Brian extended his hand, which the young castaway grasped cordially.

Looking into each other's eyes, both boys were mutually attracted at once.

"You have probably saved my life," said the stranger. "Had you not picked me up, I think it's a chance if I should have been picked up at all. The water is not cold at this time of the year; still it's far from comfortable, drifting about, fast to a wreck in a storm."

"I should think so," said Brian.

"And Hoffman is rid of me at last. I have no wish to see the vessel again."

"Hoffman?"

"Yes; he was the captain of the vessel from which I fell. He and I quarreled, and he threatened, only the other day, to put me ashore. I went out with him as captain's clerk on a trading-voyage to Petropavlovsk."

"So the vessel was not wrecked?"

"Oh, no; only lost her maintopmast in the gale we had this morning. Just as it went, I went, too."

"How was that?"

"I was standing on the rail at the time, holding to the main shrouds. All at once down came the broken topmast, and me along with leaving the craft, it must take me with it. One of the ropes attached to it caught in a bight about my right arm and jerked me like a shot into the sea. The gale was raging at the time, and I suppose Hoffman thought it was too rough for a lower a boat; at any rate he didn't lower any, and the ship soon disappeared from my sight, leaving me clinging to the spar, to which, for the sake of convenience, I afterward lashed myself."

"And you have been in this situation for some hours?"

"Yes."

"That's too bad. You must be pretty well worn out."

"On the contrary, I feel as lively as a cricket."

Looking at the clear, bright eyes of the speaker, and his straight, vigorous frame, Brian could not but acknowledge to himself that he seemed well fitted for the endurance of hardship.

"We will get aboard as soon as we can," he said.

A quarter of an hour later the boys were in the schooner's cabin, and the vessel kept on her way.

Brian had furnished his companion with a dry suit of clothes and some refreshments, to which latter the young castaway, who was half famished, did full justice.

"If you put me ashore somewhere near Petropavlovsk, toward which your craft appears to be heading, you will do me a great favor. I can then make my way to the port, where I doubt not I will find some homebound vessel, as there were several whalers there when I left."

"Do you wish to go there on business?"

"No; only to take passage for home—not that I am in any hurry to get home. All places are alike to me."

"Then don't talk of my putting you ashore," said Brian, warmly. "I had rather you would remain aboard with me—that is, provided you would like it yourself."

"Yes; that would please me better than anything else," answered the other.

"There are some people," continued Brian, "to whom I take a liking at once. I will own the truth and say that you are one of them."

"Good!" cried the other. "How strange that this was the very thought that was passing through my mind with regard to yourself!"

The two boys laughed and grasped hands.

"I am introduce ourselves," said Brian. "My name is Brian Lewis, and I am captain of this craft."

"And mine is Will Warren," said the other. "I am from the City of New York."

"And I from Dover, England," said Brian. "So now we know each other."

The two boys conversed together for some time before Brian touched upon the object of his coming up to the northern seas.

The moment he had finished his story, Will seized his hand and said:

"I am with you, heart and soul! It is a shame to keep a young lady up in that wild country, and you may depend upon it that I will do all in my power to help you get her away from there!"

"I thought you would say so!" answered Brian, with glistening eyes. "But before you promise to help me, remember that we may have a good deal of trouble in our undertaking. My country, it seems, is now at war with Russia."

"I know it," said Will, "and I'm not the kind of person, I hope, to back out of the thing on account of the danger. As I said before, I will help you rescue your sister with all my heart."

Brian thanked him warmly.

Then the two boys went on deck, and the young captain, after introducing him to his mate, showed him all over the vessel.

"You see that, although my crew is not a large one, it is composed of good, hardy fellows."

"So I see. They look as if they could make a good fight," said Will.

"I have been trying them at the sword exercise, and as most of them have served at some time of their lives aboard of a man-of-war, they are skillful with their cutlasses."

"Whose weapon is that?" inquired Will, pointing to a huge broadsword near the mast.

"Oh, that belongs to my second mate. He prefers that kind of sword to the cutlass. There he is now," added Brian, looking toward a gigantic young Welshman who had just emerged from the cabin.

The young Welshman stood about six feet two in his stockings, and was broad in proportion. He had a huge beard and mustache, a broad face, shaped something like a tiger's, and a pair of fierce, dark eyes.

Brian introduced him to Will as Mr Thompson.

The Welshman cordially shook hands with the youth.

"I have been looking at your sword, Mr. Thompson," said Will.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Thompson; "and did you try to lift her?"

"No," said Will.

"Try it, then, my friend."

The youth, to the surprise of the spectators, picked up the heavy broadsword and made it whistle about his head.

"Thunder!" cried the second mate. "What an arm you must have for a youngster!"

"It is all practice," answered Will, quietly, as he put down the sword. "My uncle had a cavalry regiment, and he taught me the broadsword exercise."

"Ha, ha! we'll have a bout, then, if you like, for sport. I have the mate to this sword."

He went into the cabin and soon returned with it.

Will received it, and the two having placed themselves in attitude, the clang of the weapons was heard.

Thompson endeavored to disarm his young antagonist by knocking his sword from his grasp, but even while he was doing so Will dealt the giant's blade so swift and dexterous a blow, that the weapon flew from his hand.

For a moment Thompson stood looking at his empty hand, as if not able to credit his senses.

Then he burst into a roar of laughter, and patting Will on the shoulder, he said:

"Well done, youngster. I see you understand your business. I once belonged to a company of dragoons, but I was not with them long."

"If you had had more practice, there are few men who would be able to cope with you," said Will, as he surveyed the gigantic frame of the Welshman.

At that moment the cry of "Sail, oh!" was borne down from aloft.

"Where away?" called Brian.

"About two points abaft the weather beam," was the reply.

"What is she like?"

"Can't make out, sir, as there's a mist thereaway that partly hides her."

Bend came up on the captain.

He had just been taking a survey of the stranger through the glass.

"Well, Mr. Bend, she is our old friend, the whaler, is she not?"

"No, sir; I was going to tell you that I don't like her looks. She is a brig, and if I'm not mistaken, is of Russian build."

Brian took the glass.

The vessel was not a league distant, but the mist partially screened her from the view of the young captain.

"She is bearing down for us under everything she can carry," said Brian.

He passed the glass to Will, who, after a moment's survey, turned quickly to his new friend.

"Mr. Bend was right," said he; "that craft is a Russian. I recognize her as an armed Russian brig, the *Diana*, which was lying off Petropavlovsk when I was there. She carries ten guns."

Brian shrugged his shoulders; then he laughed.

"We will have to show our heels; she will be too much for us. Besides, were I to try to fight her, I would never reach Okhotsk."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Bend. "No use of fighting, her unless she forces it on us, which she seems likely to do. She is a much larger craft than ours, and carries heavier canvas."

"We will trust to the fog and the darkness, which last will soon come. It she overtakes us, she shall not capture me until she has the benefit of my three little guns."

"They will not do much," said Bend, "except at close quarters. I hope we will escape the fellow."

Brian now gave his orders, and all available canvas was piled upon the schooner, which, being a swift vessel, flew through the waters like a gull.

On came the other craft in chase.

When about two miles from the schooner she hoisted Russian colors, and fired a gun as a signal to Brian to show his own.

She was now seen to be a large brig, with bristling ports on each side.

"Shall I show our colors?" said Bend, as the shot whistled across the *Swallow's* bows.

"In a moment, but not until I have answered that fellow for his impudence. Clear away the starboard gun amidships."

This was done.

"Fire!" cried Brian.

There was a flash and a puff of smoke, followed by the report.

The shot must have severed the Russian's staysail-sheet, for the canvas was seen to fly up from the boom.

"Now, up with the colors!" said Brian.

The crossed flag shot up to the mizzen amid the cheers of the men.

No sooner was the flag seen by the occupants of the brig than they commenced to bang away.

Flash after flash issued from the forward ports of the enemy, the shot making music about the masts of the little schooner.

But the Russians soon grew tired of this sort of work, which deadened their headway.

Moreover, the fog was thickening, and darkness was also coming on.

They were evidently anxious to capture the intended prize before night, for they now added sail and continued the pursuit.

"She gains on us," said Bend.

"So I see," answered Brian, coolly.

"If she keeps on gaining in this way, she will be up with us before long," remarked Will.

"Then," said Brian, "there's no help for it."

"The Russian will win her prize," remarked Thompson, the second mate.

"Never!" said Brian, firmly.

"How can you help it?" said Bend.

"There is room for the little schooner down there," said Brian, quietly pointing to the sea.

"You will scuttle her?"

"Ay. I would sink her a hundred fathoms sooner than permit the Russian to obtain the smallest chip from her timbers!"

Will grasped the speaker's hand.

"That is well said," he remarked. "I should do the same were I in your place."

"If possible," continued Brian, "we must escape from her; but if she overtakes us, I will give her at least a few good shots."

"We will not escape her," said Bend.

"No, it's impossible now," rejoined Thompson.

"There is hope," said Will, who had now sprung upon the rail and was scrutinizing the coast.

"I must own that I can see none," said Brian, as he scanned the fast-gaining brig, which loomed up larger and nearer every minute.

The Russian now ventured to fire another shot.

It came whizzing over the *Swallow's* deck, just grazing the mainsail topmast.

"Will you follow my advice?" inquired Warren.

"Certainly, if it's good, which I doubt not," said Brian.

"Then head your schooner straight for the shore."

"What! beach her!" cried Brian, in astonishment.

"No; but there are rocks within a mile of that part of the coast, and amongst them there are channels where the water would be deep enough for us, but not for the *Russian*."

"But I know *nothing* of the place. I was never up here before."

"I have been," answered Will, "and I know every creek and turn of those channels amongst the rocks. The rocks are high enough to prevent the Russian, who will be outside of them, from harming you with his shot."

"So you think you could pilot my vessel through that place?" said Brian.

"I know I could."

"And will you do it?"

"Ay, and be glad to," said Will.

"Then, for the present, I put the craft in your hands."

Will sprang to the deck.

"Square the yards!" he shouted.

The men looked at each other in surprise; but Brian hastened to inform them that, for the present, Will would take command of the schooner.

The yards were soon squared, and on went the little craft, heading straight toward the coast.

The enemy followed until within a mile of the rocks of which Will had spoken, when he luffed up, not daring to venture nearer.

The Russian officers were seen upon their quarter-deck, all gazing, evidently in astonishment, at what they deemed a foolhardy attempt on the part of the schooner's commander.

In fact the Russian was now close to the outermost line of rocks, and it seemed as if she must soon either be dashed to pieces against one of them or else be caught in the shallow water amongst them.

Perhaps to prevent such a catastrophe and thus save his intended prize, the Russian now banged away with his starboard guns, one after the other, in the hope of crippling the chase, so that she could go no further.

That, fortunately, took no effect, although one passed so close to Will Warren, who was now at the helm, that it sent a rush of wind into his ear.

The foremast hands aboard the *Swallow* looked a little doubtful at the boy, who now stood by the wheel, steering the craft straight for the rocks.

Even Bend and Thompson shrugged their shoulders and shook their heads at each other.

Brian alone watched the manœuvres of the youth with the utmost confidence.

The Russian had di-charged one broadside and was preparing for another, when, with buzzing keel, the *Swallow*, her flag rattling in the wind as if in defiance of her enemy, entered through a narrow passage between two of the rocks.

Will now worked the wheel rapidly.

Rocks both high and low seemed to stand up on all sides of him, but so skillful were his manœuvres that not a timber of the little craft was grazed.

Meanwhile, the Russian, still keeping a mile or so outside of the line of rocks, stood along on a course parallel with that of the schooner, whose masts he could see above the rugged elevations.

She will not follow us a step as we get out from among the rocks," said Bend. "She is no further from us than she was before."

Will smiled, but said nothing.

He continued his course for about two miles, working the schooner in the very midst of the rocks in a manner to excite the admiration of all aboard, when suddenly he turned off with braced yards, rounding a point which brought the craft into a bay.

By this time the darkness of approaching night and a fog had hidden the pursuer from sight. She showed no light, neither did the schooner, so that there was no way for either to determine the exact position of the other.

"Anchor, now," said Will.

Brian gave the necessary order, and the schooner soon lay nearly motionless.

At the same moment the voice of a Russian officer was heard coming out of the fog, so near that it did not seem more than two fathoms off.

"We are trapped!" said Bend.

"No," answered Will, quietly. "The fog makes the voice sound nearer than it is. The Russian is a mile off. He is passing us."

"Perhaps he is coming into the bay?" said Thompson.

"He could not bring his craft here," answered Will. "The water is too shallow for him. He has been deceived, just as I hoped he would be. He thinks that, after passing through the rock channels, we kept on out at sea."

"Then we are saved!" said Brian. "Upon my word! I thank you very much."

"Not yet," said Will. "Although the fellow is passing now, there is nothing to hinder his turning back again when he finds no trace of us."

"Then had we not better leave the bay?" said Brian.

"Yes, but not yet."

"Why?"

"There is a current here setting shoreward, and as the wind is scarcely fair, we would be sure to go ashore."

"You seem to know this part of the coast pretty well," said Brian.

"As well as my right hand," answered Will. "I have been up here many times."

Hours passed.

"It will soon be daybreak," said Will. "We must get away from here before then. The wind has changed a little, and I think we may venture."

The anchor was got up, sail made, and away went the schooner shooting out of the bay.

Not far had she gone when the flapping of canvas was heard directly ahead.

"It is the Russian, probably," said Will, as Bend and Brian came up to him.

"Ay, and judging by the noise, she cannot be more than forty fathoms ahead of us," said the young captain.

"We must lie to," said Will. "It is our only chance. Otherwise they will hear the rush of our keel and make for us."

The wheel was jammed down, and the schooner luffed up quickly, so that the rattling of the canvas might make as little noise as possible.

"Ready, there in the guns!" said Brian. "We may have to use them."

The gunners took their places and stood ready.

Strict silence was enjoined by Brian, and all on deck stood or sat motionless as so many statues, while not even a whisper was at present heard.

Louder every moment sounded the rush of the water about the Russian's bows.

"He is not quite ahead, I should judge from the sound," whispered Brian to Will; "but he will pass close to us."

"And we will probably be seen," answered Will. "Then will be the time to trust to escaping in the fog and darkness. We must try to double on the fellow."

"We shall see," said Brian. "Of course we cannot yet tell how things will turn out."

"Please to have a few men at the braces," said Will.

Brian gave the required order, and then a deathlike stillness reigned aboard the schooner.

All at once something large and black loomed up through the fog and darkness.

It was the Russian sloop-of-war, not more than two ships' lengths off.

On she came, and suddenly the hoarse cry of her lookout-man betokened that the outline of the schooner had been seen.

The cry was scarcely uttered when the war-vessel arrived abreast of the *Swallow's* starboard forechains.

A number of lanterns quickly flashed on her deck, throwing a lurid gleam upon the schooner's hull and sails.

As she dashed past, the forms of officers and men were seen peering over the rails. Then a bright flash lighted the gloom, followed by the crash of a gun, and a heavy shot passed over the *Swallow's* stern, just grazing the tops of the rails.

"Hard-a-starboard—hard!" roared Brian.

The helm was obeying, the schooner swung off just in time to avoid a whole broadside, which was now belched forth from the ports of the enemy.

"Square yards—steady there at the wheel!" continued Brian.

The sails were soon squared, and away went the little schooner, with the water flying from her bows.

Brian continued on this course for some hours; then he luffed a little, heading in the direction of Okhotsk, which he hoped to reach in a few days.

The fog had by this time cleared a little, being partially dissipated by the beams of the sun, but no sign of the Russian could now be distinguished.

"Thanks to you," said Brian to Will, "we have escaped her, although she gave us a pretty close shave."

"Ay, ay, we are clear of her for the present; but I doubt not, were the fog to lift, we would see her somewhere on the horizon."

The steward now called out that breakfast was ready, and the two boys descended to their morning meal.

After breakfast, leaving Bend in charge of the vessel, Brian sought his berth, to obtain the repose of which he was much in need.

Will also retired soon after to the berth which had been allotted to him.

Many hours elapsed ere the boys awoke. Brian was the first to open his eyes.

As he emerged from his room Will appeared from the adjoining one.

"How did you sleep?" inquired Brian.

"Finely. The Russian might have come and eaten me up, so sound was my slumber."

The twain went on deck.

"Well, Bend, any sign of the Russian?" said Brian.

"No, sir. It cleared up about an hour, and we have been looking sharp for her ever since, but we have seen nothing of her."

"Ay, ay; her captain has gone on the wrong tack after us. I don't think we'll see him again for some time."

CHAPTER III.

ASHORE.

SEVERAL days passed, during which nothing was seen of the Russian.

Toward sundown on third day, as the craft headed toward the land, a thin column was seen rising in the midst of the land from the sea.

"There you are; there's the town of Okhotsk," said Brian, "as laid down in my chart."

Will put the glass to his eye.

"The thin column we see is the spire of a church," he said, "and they look like mud-shanties."

"Yes, and we will soon have a good view of the town. I hope there are no Russian war-vessels at anchor in the harbor."

"The harbor is in the Okota River, which enters yonder into the land from the sea."

"Exactly. Have you ever been there?"

"No, but I have talked with many who have. Okhotsk is an insignificant place."

"I think I can see some of the houses from here," said Bend, "and they look like mud-shanties."

"Most of them are not much better," answered Will. "They are made of logs thatched over with bark, boards and moss."

"There is a sand-bar," said Brian. "We must keep clear of that and make straight for the river."

"That will not be quite so easy," said Bend, pointing out a breastwork of earth which had lately been erected on one of the heights.

"You are right," said Brian. "We will have to pass it in the dark. There are some fellows on the parapet looking at us now," he added, as he held the glass to his eyes.

"There may be armed craft in the river, besides," said Bend.

"We will have to run the risk of that," answered Brian. "I am determined to get there to-night."

He now gave orders to wear the ship, and the schooner was soon heading away from the town.

At the same moment a gun was fired from the fort.

"What does that mean?" said Bend.

"They want us to show our colors," laughed Brian, "but I don't think I will oblige them at present."

On went the little schooner, heading away from the coast until just before dark, when Brian again stood up for the town, knowing that a light must, which now prevailed, would screen him from the gaze of the lookouts in the fort.

For about two hours the *Swallow* kept on, when soundings warned Brian that he was close to a sandbar.

He therefore tacked until he found himself in a line with the lantern on the fort, when he knew that he was about opposite to the entrance of the river.

The schooner's yards were then squared, and she stood directly for the mouth of the Okota.

As the little vessel drew every moment nearer to the fort, Brian ordered a sharp lookout to be kept.

The fort is evidently manned by a few Cossacks and Mongols," said Will. "They are lazy fellows, and will not notice us."

"I am not so sure of that," said Brian. "Some of them have sharp eyes in time of war."

All hands had been summoned on deck, and the eyes of every man were turned up toward the light on the fort, which threw a dim glare upon the parapet, revealing the form of an armed sentry walking to and fro.

"The fellow sees nothing yet," said Brian.

"Yes; now he does—either sees or hears the flapping of our sails. Confound the wind—it is dying away!"

As Bend said this, he pointed to the sentry, who had now paused and had his head inclined, as if in a listening attitude.

At the same moment the sail again rattled.

The man now got down on his knees and peered earnestly through the darkness toward the water.

The *Swallow* was by this time so near that he evidently beheld her masts and sails.

He shouted something in Russian.

"He's hailing us," said Bend; "it's all up with us now."

"I understand enough of his lingo to know what he says," remarked Will, "and also enough to answer him. He asks what craft this is."

Leaping upon the rail, Will responded to the hail in the man's own language.

"The schooner *Dauntless*," he said, in a loud, confident voice.

The sentry appeared to be satisfied, and he was soon after joined by another person, who, after a few minutes' conversation, leaned over the parapet and shouted in Russian:

"I will send a boat aboard!"

The only word which Will could understand was "boat." All the rest was to be inferred.

"There'll be the devil to pay if they send a boat here," said Bend.

"They must not send one," answered Brian, coolly.

"How can you prevent it?"

"You shall see," answered the young captain.

The schooner, entering the mouth of the river, was passing directly under the fort, when a boat, manned by six men, was dimly seen through the obscurity approaching from the shore.

"Here they come," said Bend. "Zounds! we are in for it now."

The boat drew nearer every moment.

It was nearly abreast of the fore-chains when Brian ordered the helmsman to keep off.

The craft answered her helm promptly, and suddenly swinging off, struck the boat amidships with her bows, crushing and overturning her.

"That's he! Down helm and keep as you were before," said Brian.

Again the graceful bows of the schooner were pointed on their former course.

Peering through the darkness, while the vessel dashed on, the crew could just make out the heads of two of the wrecked men as they swam for the shore.

"There are *two*," remarked Will, "but there were *three* in the boat."

Even as he spoke, however, a *cry* was heard forward.

One of the capsized trio had contrived, when the boat was struck, to grasp the schooner's bobstay and clamber up in the bow.

The lookout seized him, caught him by the hair and pulled him aboard.

The man, with remonstrative cries, endeavored to disengage himself from the grasp, and a struggle ensued.

Brian and Will rushed forward.

Even in the dim light they could perceive that the stranger was a Mongul, with high cheek-bones, dusky skin, and long, oval eyes.

His garb consisted of a light sheepskin tunic, a round, fur-lined cap, and leggins of deerskin.

The sailor still held him by his long, black hair, from which the water fell in little rivulets.

On seeing the three officers, whom, by their dress and appearance, he at once perceived were not Russians, the Mongol opened his mouth, evidently for the purpose of shouting a warning cry to those above in the fort.

Brian, however, prevented this by pulling a pistol from his belt and placing the muzzle between the man's teeth.

"No noise, or I will blow out your brains!" he said, in a low, stern voice.

At this the other stood perfectly still, and withdrawing the muzzle of the pistol, Brian permitted him to close his mouth.

"Do you understand English?" said Brian.

"Yes, little," was the reply.

"Well, then, I repeat that if you attempt to give any alarm, you shall die. Understand?"

"Yes, quite clear."

"That is right. Now, then, I want to ask you a few questions. Will you answer them?"

"If no against Russians me answer. If against, no answer."

He was followed by Will and Bend, conducted the man aft into the cabin.

By the light of the lamp there, the Mongol was seen to be of short stature, and bow-legged, the latter probably being caused by his habit of riding the horse, to which his people are bred from childhood.

With the exception of a long knife in his girdle, he was unarmed.

"There is a Russian living here named John Lolski, is there not?" inquired Brian.

"Yes."

"Where does he live?"

"What for you wantee know? You hurt?"

"I have no wish to hurt him, but there is with him a young girl named Minnie, whom I would like to see."

"Yes, he have niece. English snow-flower."

"You call her so because she is fair, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Well, I must see that girl. That was, in fact, my only reason for coming here. Will you tell me where she lives?"

"Yes; live in house not far from town. About four hundred steps on hill back of it."

"That will do. I will now keep you in confinement until I leave this place, when I will let you go."

He made the man enter the hold through a door in the bulkhead, and locked him in.

Then he went on deck to see how the vessel was progressing.

"There seems to be no craft in the river at present," said Bend. "Yonder is the town."

Looking in the indicated direction Brian beheld a few twinkling lights.

"We must work quick," he said. "We have a good deal to do to-night, and the nights are so short here at this time of the year that we have but a few hours to do it in."

Having stood on a little nearer to the town Brian dropped anchor, with his sails hanging loose, that he might get under way at a moment's notice.

Then he had one of the quarter-boats lowered and manned by half a dozen armed men.

"I will go with you," said Will.

"And I, also," said Thompson, the Watchman.

The latter nodded on his broadsword and thrust a pistol into his belt.

"As you are good enough to go with me you you shall be well armed," said Brian to Will.

He provided him with a sword and a pistol.

"How are we to find the way?" inquired Will, as the boat was being pulled shoreward.

"Easy enough," said Brian. "The Mongol told us it was the largest house in the town, and that it was on a hill. Now, if you look up toward the back of the town you will see a light, which I believe comes from the very house we are in search of, as it is the highest light anywhere about here, except that on the fort."

"It would be amusing," said Will, "if it should prove to be the wrong house."

"I don't think we will have that trouble," answered Brian. "One thing in our favor is that most of the inhabitants of this town have gone to bed. You can perceive there are but few lights."

The boat soon struck upon a gravelly beach.

Thompson and the men were left in charge of it.

Brian and Will entered the town. They walked some distance without seeing any person, passing rows of low, but strongly-built houses or huts, framed of hewn logs, and well cemented.

As they proceeded they heard a tremendous yelping and barking from dogs, whole troops of which now and then were seen.

At length they passed an old church, and then a long, low building, from the latter of which emanated a light and the sound of many voices.

Looking through one of the windows as they passed, and perceiving a group of half-uniformed Cossacks in the room, they concluded that the building was the barracks.

A soldier stood by one of the windows, but he did not see them.

Twenty minutes later they found themselves at the door of the house whose light they had seen.

"Now, what do you propose to do?" said Will.

As he spoke the sound of a piano was heard from within, mingling with the tones of which rose a sweet but rather sad, girlish voice.

"Do you hear that?" said Brian, clutching the arm of his friend.

"Yes, what a beautiful voice."

"It is hers—Minnie's!"

"How do you know that?"

"It is her voice. Long as it is since I heard it, I recognize it in spite of its being changed by time."

"Do you think she will consent to go with us?"

"Oh, yes. She will know me as soon as she sees me. I feel sure of that."

Just then the door opened, and the face of an old Mongol woman was thrust forth.

Seeing the boys, she said something in her own language which they could not understand.

Will advanced, and the light from the hall streamed upon his person.

"My good woman," said he, "I do not understand your language. I am an American. My vessel has just come in."

"You wantee see Mr. Lotski?"

"If you please."

The woman called out in a shrill voice, and John Lotski soon made his appearance.

Brian recognized him at once.

He was now about sixty years of age—a stout, middling-sized man, wearing the usual robe and broad collar of the Russian.

"You wanted to see me?" he said, peering keenly from under his shaggy brows at Will, who had advanced.

"Yes, sir," answered Will, perceiving that the man did not recognize him, "I am an American from a vessel which has just arrived. I wanted to ask you a few questions about this port, which I have never visited before."

"Certainly, certainly; you are very welcome. Walk in."

"I have a friend with me," said Will, "and——"

"Oh, of course. Come in, both of you."

The two boys entered, to be conducted up-stairs by their host into a large, neatly-furnished room, in which was a party of four people—a Russian officer in uniform, an old lady, a youth of twenty, whom Brian at once knew to be Lotski's son, Peter, and a young girl seated at a piano.

She ceased playing the moment her uncle entered with the sailors.

Lotski had previously asked the names of his unexpected guests.

The young captain had stated that his was George Brian, and given his friend's own name.

The two youths were now introduced to the party in the room.

Peter could scarcely repress a scowl as he shook hands with Will, who, attired in a neat uniform, which well became his excellent proportions, was as fine a looking youth as ever walked a quarterdeck.

Peter, on the contrary, was short and very fat, with a broad, flat face, and eyes deeply sunken in his head.

His thick legs were of unequal length, one being much shorter than the other, and, although his tunic partially concealed this defect, it could not hide his enormous feet, which were almost twice as large as those of an ordinary man, and made to seem even larger than they were by the long, round-toed boots worn by his people.

The Russian officer, who was rather tall and very straight, with clear, light, keen eyes, and a heavy beard, was a fine-looking man.

Minnie, who was last introduced, blushed deeply as she offered her hand to Will.

Raising her eyes, which had momentarily been veiled by their long lashes, she caught the gaze of

Brian fixed upon her with a peculiar expression, which at once arrested her attention. Just before that, when he was presented to her by her uncle, she had noticed something familiar in his face—a look which had set her to wondering where she had ever seen him before.

As to Will, he thought he had never in his life looked upon a face to compare with that of the young girl.

She was a little above the middling height, and wore a white dress, which set off to perfection the fine proportions of her form. Her matchless shoulders, which were slightly revealed, were as smooth and white as ivory; her waist was round, lithe and supple; she was hollow in the back, and when she walked her motions were like those of a swan upon the water.

The features were small and regular, yet full of expression; the skin transparently clear, with a little rose-color in the cheeks; the eyes of a deep-blue, and the hair, which was done up in braids back of her well-shaped head, was luxuriant and of a brown color.

Will, who, as already stated, was of dark complexion, liked fair women, and no wonder, therefore, that he felt himself at once drawn to this beautiful girl.

Soon after the boys were seated, Lofski brought in a decanter of wine and some glasses.

All, with the exception of Minnie, drank, Lofski proposing a toast to the young guests.

"I heartily approve of that toast," said the Russian captain. "I am always glad to toast American officers."

"And we hope yet to toast you, sir," said Brian, with a meaning glance at Will.

The Russian bowed.

"Your vessel has just arrived?" said Captain Kickavitch, the name of the officer.

"Yes, sir," answered Brian.

"I suppose you were boarded by a boat?" continued Kickavitch.

"We certainly were," said Brian.

"I hope they did not treat you roughly?"

"They treated us better than we treated *them*," said Brian, frankly.

"Pardon me," said Kickavitch, "if I ask you not to be offended. I have to send a boat aboard of every vessel, with a request to look at the papers. We have to be strict in time of war."

"They did not trouble us at all, I can assure you," said Brian.

"I am glad to hear it. The sergeant at the fort is a little gruff at times. He is a hot-blooded fellow, that Dogsvak."

"I think, sir, he is cooled off by this time," said Brian.

Kickavitch stared, as if not exactly understanding this.

Brian explained.

"He fell overboard."

"Not drunk, I hope, sir?" said Kickavitch, knitting his brows.

"I think not, although he was more than half seas over"—when he was in the water."

Kickavitch understood this joke, and laughed.

Lofski joined in, and even Peter smiled.

"These Americans will have their joke," said the host, rubbing his large, red nose with his thumb.

Meanwhile, the soft blue eyes of Minnie were turned, with a steady gaze, upon Brian, while she flushed and became pale by turns.

Perceiving that her manner was likely to attract attention, Will, who understood the cause of it, took advantage of a minute when the gaze of the others was turned away from her, to whisper in her ear:

"It is as you suspect. The young man is your brother."

Minnie started, and with difficulty repressed a slight cry.

"Pray control yourself," continued Will. "We are here to rescue you from your uncle's clutches."

The eyes of the young girl lighted up.

In a moment she controlled her agitation, and, with feminine readiness, appeared calm and unconcerned, although her heart beat fast and her full bosom rose and fell.

Under pretense of looking at a picture on the wall, she moved to the other side of the room, where Will, readily taking the hint, soon followed her.

They were now so far from the others in the apartment that they could converse without being heard.

"You tell me he is my brother?" said Minnie, in a low voice. "I thought I had seen his face, but he has so altered since he was a child that I did not recognize him. Is your vessel is in the harbor?"

"Yes, and a boat waiting at the beach to take you off."

"I can get ready in a few minutes. I can pack what few things I wish to carry in a valise, and throw it out the window."

"That is well, for it is necessary that we should get off as soon as possible. But how will you go out?"

"Easily. I will first go up in my room, which is the one next to this, pack up my things, and throw them from the window. Then I will come back here and propose to take you and my brother down into the lower room to see an American picture-

A SUBMARINE ADVENTURE.—MR. GRANT'S EXCURSION UNDER THE BOTTOM OF A SCOW.

A FEARFUL ADVENTURE AND A NARROW ESCAPE.

scene there. Mr. Lofski will suspect nothing, and we can go out of the front door and be aboard your vessel before my uncle even misses me."

"A capital plan," said Will, "and——"

A slight touch on his arm, as if by accident from the hand of his fair companion, checked the youth, who then perceived that Peter had sauntered, or rather, waddled toward them.

In fact, this young man would now and then glance keenly toward them from under his fat brows, as if he suspected something.

Minnie then moved toward the rest of the party, and, sitting down by the side of the old lady, entered into conversation with her.

At length, excusing herself, and being careful not to look at Will, she rose and left the room.

Peter moved toward the door, as if to follow her. Will, however, prevented this by walking up to him and asking him a few questions about the place.

"I notice that you have plenty of dogs here," he said. "I would ask if the sergeant at the fort is named after them?"

Peter stared.

"How, sir?" he inquired, in a fat, piping voice, something like that of a seal.

"He is called Dogsvak, is he not?" said Will.

"Oh, yes, yes; but of course he is not named after the dogs."

"You must have a pleasant prospect about here in the Winter season," continued Will; "especially for a young lady. How she must enjoy it!"

"She does," said Peter, stroking his thin, white mustache. The snow and ice is grand in this part of the world."

"Especially, as I said before, for a young lady. Snow ten, or even twenty, feet deep, so that she cannot stir from the house; and then the ice for a change."

"I think you are jesting," said Peter, looking a little displeased. "But I can assure you that Miss Lewis can find amusement indoors as well as when she goes out. I flatter myself," continued Peter, again stroking his mustache, "that *I* can amuse her at any time."

"You are fortunate," said Will; "and now to change the subject, suppose we talk a little about Captain Kickavitch. I should not think *he* could be very amusing."

"One of my most intimate friends. He has the misfortune, however, to be a little too stern and reserved, to please my fair cousin. Has not my faculty, you know," added Peter, slapping his big legs and laughing in a voice something like the croaking of a bull-frog. "He has not the gift of the tongue at all, that Kickavitch."

"Ay, ay; I dare say Kickavitch will therefore remain single until he gives his last kick."

"He is better with the sword than the tongue," continued Peter.

"An excellent fault," said Will.

"One which most of you sailors and military men possess. Your friend is the captain of the vessel, I think he said?"

"Yes, and there never was a better one for his age."

"Do you know," continued Peter, "that I fancy he has more of an *English* than an American look?"

"Do you really think so?"

"Yes; but perhaps his parents were English."

Peter looked keenly at Will as he spoke.

"Confound the fellow," was Will's mental comment. "I believe he has suspicions. These Russians are shrewd people."

Then he said, carelessly:

"I believe they were."

"It seems to me also that there is a singular resemblance between him and my cousin."

Again his light eyes were turned upon Will, as if he would read him to the soul.

"That is strange. I cannot say that I have noticed it," replied Will, as carelessly as before.

Just then the sound of a horse's hoofs was heard in the street.

The horse seemed to stop before the door of the house.

The Mongol woman, a moment later, hurriedly entered the room and said something to Lofski, who at once spoke in a low voice to Captain Kickavitch.

The latter then spoke to the woman, who went away.

The next moment the creaking of boots was heard on the stairs, the door opened, and a half-uniformed Cossack entered, saluted, and spoke low and hurriedly to Captain Kickavitch.

Will and Brian exchanged glances.

Peter, the moment the Cossack entered, had glided behind the captain, where he could hear every word that was said.

Will hurried to his friend's side and whispered:

"I'm afraid the cat is out of the bag."

"We shall see. We must get as near to the door as possible."

Just then Minnie entered.

"Uncle," she said to Lofski, "I am going to show these gentlemen that picture of Niagara Falls downstairs."

"I will go with you," said Peter.

"Oh, no, you need not trouble yourself," said Minnie.

"No trouble at all," answered Peter, bowing.

Minnie colored with vexation, but there was no help for it. She could not tell Peter, without exciting his suspicions, that she preferred to go alone.

[To be continued.]

A SUBMARINE ADVENTURE.

JUST after dark one evening last week George C. Grant, a compositor employed in the *Post* news-room, Detroit, put out from the foot of Griswold Street in a smallboat for a row on the river. Seeing the lights of a steam-barge coming up the river close to the docks, Mr. Grant lay upon his oars until the barge had nearly passed, when he rowed out to catch the swell. Owing to the darkness, he did not see that the barge had a scow in tow, and the first intimation that he had of the danger was a dim and brief view of what seemed to be a tow-line. The next instant the scow struck the smallboat broadside, and over Mr. Grant went. Then he felt himself drawn under the water, and realized that he was under some kind of craft, though he did not know what. Thoughts of being dashed to pieces by paddle-wheels, and of being caught in the lightning-like revolutions of a screw propelier flashed through his mind, until, as he felt his back sliding along the slimy bottom of the hull, he suddenly realized that a portion of his clothing had caught in a splinter, and that he was being dragged along under water. With the strength of despair he made one more effort, in which he ripped off the waistband of his pants, and was again slipping astern. What if the rudder projected below the bottom of the boat? was a question that presented itself, and to answer it Mr. Grant tried to dive deeper down, but the suction held him fast, until suddenly, when hope had nearly fled, he began to rise, and the next instant his head came to the surface. Singularly enough the rowboat came up with him, and not three feet away, thus affording him means to keep afloat until Captain Walter Campbell, of the ferryboat *Fortune*, threw him a life-preserver and rescued him. Mr. Grant lost a coat and vest, a gold watch and chain and his hat.

FEARFUL ADVENTURE—NARROW ESCAPE OF THE PARTICIPATORS.

ONE afternoon Charles Marston and Frank Davis, of Augusta, Maine, performed the foolish and reckless exploit of sailing over the dam in a batteau. Marston has twice performed the same feat. Davis undertook the performance on a wager of one hundred dollars. A large crowd assembled on both sides of the river to view the performance, and as it was well-known that the voyagers were to sail over the middle of the dam, thus making the feat as thrilling as it could be made, the liveliest excitement prevailed, while curiosity was on tiptoe as to the result.

At half-past three o'clock the wherry containing the adventurers put off from the east side of the river, paddled by Marston. Both were seated amidships. On reaching the middle of the river the boat was given up to the current and down she shot, her speed increasing as she approached the edge of the dam, when, amid the breathless silence of the spectators, she plunged over the abyss into the foaming, turbulent waters beneath. Where the boat went over was not at the perpendicular part of the dam, but the sloping portion, a descent of twenty feet, the foot of which being composed of a series of whirlpools.

Into this seething vortex of eddies the boat disappeared, and when next seen it was shattered and bottom up, the men clinging to the wreck for dear life.

The scene was intensely exciting, the boat being at the complete mercy of the undertow, with scarcely a prospect of the men saving their lives. A boat was sent out from the shore to attempt a rescue, but it proved abortive, it being impossible to extend relief. There was scarcely a witness of the scene but expected to see the men meet with a watery grave. In the midst of the danger Davis proposed quitting the shattered boat and trying to swim ashore; but Marston being an expert raftsman, and not for one moment losing his self-possession, told his companion to hang on and he would get them both out of the trouble. And he did. By a skilful and dexterous use of the paddle, which he had retained during the exigency, he worked the boat out of the foaming and dangerous gorge, and in a few minutes they came ashore amid the wildest shouts of the crowd. Had it not been for Marston's familiarity with river-diving, it is highly probable neither would have reached the shore alive. Marston has offered to go over the dam at the same place again on a log if a purse of twenty-five dollars can be made up for him. But it is hoped that the city authorities will put a stop to the repetition of such rash and reckless exploits.

DANGEROUS ATTACK FROM A DOMESTIC CAT.

ONE of the strangest and most persistent attacks we have ever heard of has been made by a cat upon a little girl, who with two companions had been out berrying, and had approached Mr. S. P. Branton's house, on the Convent property, Chatham, C. E., to obtain a drink of water. The children no sooner appeared at the door than a house cat, which had been quietly dozing in the sun, made a spring at one of the children, and with teeth and claws bit and tore the child's face and shoulders in a dreadful way. Attracted by its shrieks, Mr. Branton, who had been at work near by, ran up, and snatching the child in his arms, beat the maddened and infuriated animal off with a club. Thrice was the attack attempted to be renewed upon the same girl, and had assistance not been at hand there is no doubt the beast would have overcome the child. Mr. Branton's clothes were covered with blood.

AN INGENIOUS RAT-TRAP.

HOW is the cunning little creature to be caught? The answer is simple. A man's brain is bigger than a rat's; set your cunning against his, and you will win. Here is one plan adopted by a gentleman I know, who had tried the usual traps in vain. In a store-room was a barrel of maize-flour, of which the rats were enormously fond, and their habit was to climb up to a shelf, run along it, leap down on the flour, and feast. Good! My friend took another barrel, and of the head he made the trap. He took it out, and treating it as a globe, he made a wire north and south pole, which, when placed in corresponding holes in the cask, allowed the lid to spin round and round on its pivots, and return directly to its natural horizontal position. When ready, this cask was placed in the stead of the flour-cask, its head fixed firmly, and covered thickly with the sweet Indian-meal. The rats came, leaped down as usual, feasted, and went away. This was kept up for a couple of nights, fresh flour being placed on the head, and duly eaten. Then came the Nemesis. The next night that barrel was half filled with water, the head glued and thickly sprinkled with flour, and then left loose, swinging so easily that on the first rat leaping down there was a slip and a scramble, followed by a hollow splash, but the lid resumed its position, covering the drowning enemy, and placing itself ready to entrap the next. For months that trick succeeded well, four or five rats being taken of a night, and the place was at last well cleared.

REUBEN LOWRY, of Walker Township, Anderson County, Kansas, was hunting wolves one day during the snow. He got track of a wolf, and with his dogs followed to the timber, where he overtook it, and the dogs and the wolf fought in the snow. Uncle Reuben, however, who was on horseback, managed to put a lead of shot into the wolf. An old gray-hound laid the wolf out on the snow apparently dead. Uncle Reuben had strings attached to his saddle behind to tie game to, and, lashing the carcass of the wolf to the saddle, he mounted for home. All unconscious of any difficulty, he awakened suddenly to the fact that the wolf had been playing 'possum, and was viciously snapping, and making vigorous efforts to get away from the saddle thongs. Uncle Reuben, of course, could not get off the horse to kill the wolf, and was in imminent danger of being bitten where he was. He had the presence of mind, however, to watch his opportunity, and grabbed the beast by the neck in such a manner that it could not bite, and held it there until he got home, where his grandson killed it.

DANGEROUS ATTACK FROM A DOMESTIC CAT.—IT REPEATEDLY ASSAILS A LITTLE GIRL.

COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.—OUR GUIDE.

COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.

READ THIS IF YOU CHEW.

ALTHOUGH the gatherer of our statistics designs not to classify spruce-gum amid his "specified industries," and the profound chronicler of the "growth of our natural resources" stops short and "draws a line" at maple-sugar, the collection and preparation of spruce-gum for market is not unworthy the attention of these worthies. Its market value exceeds that of any other natural product of field or forest, being about forty cents per pound.

The amount collected must be reckoned by tons; its use is so general that it is largely adulterated, and even imitated, and there are few, indeed, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, north of Mason and Dixon's Line, who has not at some time or another indulged in the habit of chewing spruce-gum.

In those sections where it abounds its use is almost universal. The children go about their play with a quid in their mouths, and at school stick the prohibited gum to the under side of the desk until "recess" or "dismission"; the boy drives to mill silently revolving the fragrant morsel, and the rustic belle mingles with her sweet kisses the odorous perfume of this freest incense.

Our last phrase reminds us that the Jesuit missionary amid northern fields, and the humble priest of many an Arcadian flock, has often substituted for the more precious Eastern gums which should have filled his censer the fragrant tears which well from the wounded bark of the sombre evergreens of the forest.

It was in the last week of August that four men sallied forth under the direction of "Uncle Luther" Harriman, who looks forward each year to a pleasant trip into this section, and a lucrative harvest of gum.

After following the "Great Interval Road," amid the wild scenery of Moss, Bear, Chocorua (the northern side), Haystack, Saddle Back, Green's Cleft, Rattlesnake, and other mountains, they left their teams at Hub Burbank's, and the next morning, in Indian file, took the trail from Saugus River, and Garrigan and Sugar-loaf Mountains, on whose slopes their harvest awaited them.

At Sawyer's Road, five miles out, they halted for the night, pitched their seven-by-nine cotton tent, caught "about a peck of as fine trout as the great Murray of Adirondack fame ever saw," devoured the same incontinently and completely, with bread and hot Java coffee in proportion, and, after one of those comfortable forest *siestas* around the fire, pipe in mouth, retired to sleep, as men only can after the toils and the pleasures of a day's wandering in the primeval forest.

At daylight they awake, the fires are replenished, and, rod in hand, they draw from the lake unstinted supplies of tasty, delicious trout.

After breakfast the little party again wind amid the woods of the Sawyer Range—a vast wilderness, unbroken by any traces of civilization, timbered by the heaviest growth of pine and spruce to be found on this continent, many of the pine-trees running a hundred feet between the ground and the first limb straight as an arrow, and measuring six to eight feet on the stump—and by the middle of the afternoon had ascended Sawyer's River, fishing as they went, and at last struck the east fork, which they followed about a mile, pitching their tent on a little acclivity on the right bank, surmounted by noble pines and spruces, which served the double purpose of shade and shelter.

A fire was soon started, and all partook of a hearty meal of trout, corned beef and other "fixings." That same evening they commenced gathering, finding the gum plenty, although Uncle Luther had secured a great haul the previous season on the same ground.

Signs of bear, moose and deer were abundant, and at times the party were startled by an old buck thrashing through the underbrush, or an occasional growl from old Brum, disturbed in his repast of mooseberries; and, having secured from six to eight pounds per man, returned to camp, satisfied that they were in the "gum country."

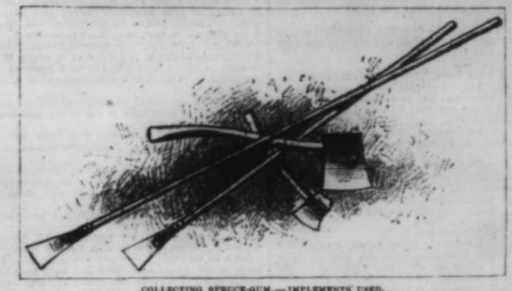
The supper being disposed of, we all listened to several yarns from the elders, and then turned in and slept soundly, despite the howling of mountain-wolves kept up in the distance, probably attracted by the savory odor of the larder.

On the following morning all struck out for the great gum region in the "basin" between Mounts Carrigan and Sugar Loaf, about three miles from camp, due north, which contained in its area about thirty square miles of heavy spruce-gum trees yet unscathed by the gum-collector, where the party averaged about fifteen pounds to the man. At the end of a week each had a two-bushel meal-bag two-thirds full of fine gum, and, in addition, the party had captured two yearling bear cubs, treed by their dog Nero, and killed with revolver and gumming-hatchet, and had caught two thousand two hundred and thirty-six fine brook and pond trout, with a number of partridges.

At five o'clock, Monday, A. M., they struck camp, and in Indian file, each one loaded with seventy-five to eighty pounds of camp-luggage and gum, returned to Burbank's, having had an enjoyable tramp at the rate of five dollars and five cents each, and clearing, after the above deduction, twenty-five dollars apiece on the week's work.

We present the sketches of the various incidents of this novel trip, and the scenery of this as yet little known section, which one day we hope to explore, not vicariously, but duly equipped with rod, rifle and hatchet.

COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.—SORTING GUM.



COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.—IMPLEMENTS USED.

COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.—COMING OUT OF THE FOREST.

COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.—PICKING GUM.

COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.—GUM-HUNTERS' CAMP.

COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.—A TICKLISH PLACE.

A WILD CAT.

DOCTOR C. F. WARE, of Bucksport, Maine, had rather an exciting experience with a *loup-cervier* recently. Some of his friends had been spending the evening at his house, which is situated on Seminary Hill, and at nine o'clock the doctor took a small lamp and started for the cellar after some apples. A portion of the cellar is used for piling wood, and as he neared the bottom of the stairs he heard footsteps, and then some wood rattled down, as if a man was moving about in the cellar.

Raising his lamp in order to get a better view, the doctor advanced a few steps, when he saw a huge *loup-cervier* that had made its way through a basement-door that had been accidentally left open. He picked up a stick of wood to club the animal, but it jumped from one side of the cellar to the other so rapidly that he could not strike it. He then went up-stairs and procured a revolver, and after telling the folks to keep the sitting-room door closed he returned to the cellar. This time he found the *loup-cervier* perched on the edge of the coal-bin and shot at it, when the animal jumped to the top of the wood-pile, some fifteen feet distant.

The doctor then tried another shot, and as the lamp-chimney fell off, leaving him in total darkness, he was obliged to go up-stairs and get another lamp. On his return to the cellar he fired two more shots, when the lamp-chimney again fell off, and while in the dark the *loup-cervier* bounded past him and ran up-stairs and started up a second flight, but being unable to proceed on account of a door, he came down again and rushed into the pantry.

Here he perched himself upon a large oil-can, where he remained until the doctor fired another shot, when he started out of the pantry, and being attracted by the light coming through a window over the sitting-room door, he made a jump for it, but fell back again and ran down to the cellar. His course was marked with blood, which was flowing quite freely, and after procuring a lantern the doctor followed him to the cellar, where he again fired, when, much to his disgust, the concussion put the lantern out. He went up-stairs and lighted it again, but on his return he found that the *loup-cervier* had disappeared, and as there are no tracks leading from the house, it is supposed that the animal crawled under the wood and died.

It was quite remarkable that during the whole fight the *loup-cervier* did not attack the doctor

COLLECTING SPRUCE-GUM.—A GOOD RECORD.

THE seven wonders of the world were: 1. The Pyramids of Egypt; 2. The Pharos, or Lighthouse of Alexander; 3. The Walls and Hanging-gardens of Babylon; 4. The Temple of Diana at Ephesus; 5. The Statue of Jupiter, by Phidias, at Olympia; 6. The Mausoleum of Artemisia at Halicarnassus; 7. The Colossus of Rhodes.

WILD ROSE AND VIOLET;

Or,

Fun at Mrs. Hawk's.

CHAPTER XLVI.

[Continued from page 246.]

THE voice of Rose was piteously pleading as she said:

"But you won't, Humphrey—you won't have any wife but me, will you?"

"I should think not," cried her lover, fervently; "and you, darling?"

"I'll never marry any one but you, Humphrey—never, never!"

These assurances were followed by sundry loving kisses and embraces, during which Captain John and Uncle Ben took snuff and wiped away the drops with which sheer astonishment had bedewed their foreheads.

After a pause the fictitious Humphrey inquired:

"Do you know who the fellow is your uncle is so bent upon sacrificing you to?"

"I don't know him in the least. I have not even seen him," returned the counterfeit Becky. "All I know is that his name is Harry Target or Tankard, or——"

"Targent, perhaps," suggested the young gentleman, a peculiar expression passing over his features.

"Yes, that's it. How did you know?"

Harry did not reply, but a strange smile flitted round his lips whilst his fair companion said:

"And who is the lady your cruel father wishes you to marry?"

"I've never seen her," was the answer, "but her name's Rose Royston."

"Oh, oh, is it possible?" ejaculated Rose, in intense astonishment at these words. "Why, that's my name!"

"Indeed! Then you are Rose Royston?"

"Yes, darling. Don't be angry with me for deceiving you, but——"

"Angry, love? I'm delighted; for I've deceived you. I'm Harry Targent, and only changed my name to avoid recognition."

"That was exactly my reason for changing mine; to escape from the clutches of Mrs. Hawk."

"Bravo!" shouted Harry, in an ecstasy of delight; "we've turned out at last to be just the identical persons our affectionate relatives intended for each other. Oh, isn't this glorious?"

"Delightful—charming!" exclaimed Rose.

"I trust my change of name will not alter your affection," remarked Harry, "and that you'll like me as a 'Targent' as well as if I'd been a 'Tadpole.'"

"Oh, yes, yes, darling, I'm sure I shall," returned Rose, eagerly; "for though I should always have loved you, I did think sometimes Tadpole rather a funny name."

"Ha, ha, ha! I should think so! Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Harry, buoyantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried the two hearty, stentorian voices from behind the bushes in the immediate vicinity, and at the same instant the red faces and portly forms of the two captains in a perfect convulsion of mirth stood before them.

"Here are the cruel relatives," they cried, continuing to laugh till the tears ran down their cheeks, whilst Rose blushed and hid her face on Harry's shoulder.

"There, there," said Uncle Ben, after their mirth had somewhat subsided, "all's forgotten and forgiven, and we shall have a match, after all."

"Without any Tadpoles or frogs, either, uncle," slyly supplemented Rose.

The old sailor embraced his beautiful niece, and the whole party returned to the house to lunch.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A LIVING HORROR.

MRS. FLINT SKINNER promised to provide her niece with a situation, and she lost no time in keeping her word.

The very next day she appeared at Meditation House with a spectral-looking female called Mrs. McFerret Currie.

The lady was the widow of an extensive indigo-planter, who had come to sojourn for a time in England.

A more hideous object in the shape of a woman it was almost impossible to conceive.

Everything about her was utterly delusive.

Her hair and eyebrows were false, so was one of her eyes, and so were all her teeth.

She carried a fortune on her person in the shape of dress and jewels, the only utterly valueless thing attached to her being herself.

Such was the individual who, being in want of a companion of "amiable temper and ladylike habits" to carry back with her to India, was now brought by Mrs. Flint Skinner to inspect Violet.

The hideous old lady, having scrutinized the young girl, and asked her a great many questions, condescended to express herself satisfied, and Violet was instructed to prepare to accompany her new mistress to London.

The whole arrangement was so sudden that Violet scarcely realized her position till she found herself in the room endeavoring to pack up the few things she could call her own.

With a deep feeling of regret and a sinking at the heart she had never before experienced, she entered the carriage and was borne away.

The first evening's experience Violet had of her new mistress was sufficient to confirm the unpleasant impressions she had formed.

And if this was not enough, there came an addition to the party in the shape of a certain Mr. Sandy McFerret, Mrs. Currie's nephew, a raw-boned, red-faced, large footed youth of some five-and-thirty.

This interesting personage, of whom his aunt made a great deal—he being her presumptive heir—was evidently struck with Violet's beauty.

Yet at the same time he regarded her with some suspicion.

The reason of this was very quickly explained.

"You'll no be makin' yourself too agreeable to my aunt, my bonnie lassie," he said to Violet, very candidly, after dinner, whilst his relative slumbered in her arm-chair. "You see I'm to hae all her property when she deeve; an' it wudna be pleasant for a stranger to come in an' tak' it all awa, ye ken."

"I'm sure I have no such desire," said Violet, considerably embarrassed.

"I'm willin' to believe that, an' I think you're a varra gude an' a very fair lassie, an' I've taken a great fancy to ye. So aw you've got to do's just to be varra fond o' me an' in time I'll mak' ye Mistress Sandy McFerret. D'ye see, now?"

Violet made no reply. She was too depressed and too disgusted to utter a word, and to her great relief, her mistress woke.

"Are you there, Miss Leigh?" she cried, sharply.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Violet.

"How very cold it is! I'm quite chilly," was the next remark.

It was a sultry August evening, and not a breath of air was stirring, and Violet felt quite oppressed, and did not hesitate to say so.

But her mistress would not admit it.

Violet rose, and with a sigh closed the window, and in that act felt she had shut herself out from all communion with the world beyond the limits of that chamber, whilst her mummy-like mistress sat muffled up in her shawl in her armchair, declaring that she was perishing with cold, and she must have a fire.

But to this her nephew offered an objection.

"No, no, you'll make do that, auntie," he said. "Consider your complexion."

"Ah, true, Sandy; true," she responded. "I forgot that. I must endeavor to preserve my complexion."

"I want some one who will study my ways, and do exactly as I order them," she croaked; "I can't bear to be alone, and therefore I shall want you to be always with me, and you must be very lively and amusing and keep me from being dull. Can you sing?"

"A little, ma'am," replied Violet, almost gasping from the closeness of the atmosphere.

"Sing, then."

The young girl had a violent headache, but not wishing to displease her taskmistress, she attempted her favorite song, "The Last Rose of Summer."

Her voice was weak and faltering, and, remembering when she had last sung that song, she broke down before the end of the first verse.

Mrs. McFerret was evidently disappointed.

"I don't call that singing," she remarked, gruffly. "Don't sing any more."

Violet, glad to be excused, was immediately silent.

"You're very dull," said the old lady to her, presently.

"I don't feel very well this evening, ma'am," she replied.

"Oh, you must always be well," exclaimed her mistress. "I don't want any sick people about me. I'm an invalid myself. You're tired, I suppose: I am. We'll go to bed."

"Where am I to sleep, ma'am?"

"Where? Why, with me, of course," was the sharp response. "I can't bear to be left alone in the dark. I'm so very nervous and restless. I'm up and down as many as half-a-dozen times some nights. I hope you're wakeful."

"I dare say I shall wake when you require me," answered the poor victim, wearily subduing with difficulty an involuntary yawn at the same time.

There being no possible alternative, Violet resigned herself to the infliction she could not escape; and the bedroom candles being rung for, Mrs. McFerret and her beautiful companion proceeded to the sleeping apartment, where a fire burnt in the grate, although it was the month of August, and very hot weather.

"I hope you won't be melted, miss," said the chambermaid, who accompanied them, aside to Violet, with a look of the most sincere pity in her face.

Violet reciprocated the friendly wish, but the violence of the old creature was beyond endurance, and finally aroused the landlady.

"Is anything the matter?" asked a voice without.

"Matter, no!" roared the infuriated old dame; "go away! how dare you disturb me in this manner?"

"No, no!" cried Violet, vehemently, rushing to the door, and unlocking it; "don't go, pray don't! Let me out!"

The door opened, and the mistress of the hotel appeared outside in a state of *deshabille*, holding a candle in her hand.

"What is the matter?" she inquired, as she remarked the terror depicted on the young girl's face.

"Nothing — nothing's the matter," replied the latter, excitedly; "but I can't stay here any longer with that dreadful old woman. Pray let me have another room."

"Certainly," replied the proprietress, kindly, "you shall have another room. Don't be frightened, my dear."

The good woman soothed the agitated girl, and not being apprehensive of the old fury that grinned at her ludicrously over the top of the bedclothes, she collected Violet's garments and carried them with her.

"I'll send for the police to-morrow, you pale-faced minx, you!" screamed the hag, after her companion; "I'll imprison you for making this disturbance."

"Be quiet yourself, if you please, ma'am," said the landlady, calmly; "it's you who are disturbing every one. If you continue this conduct, I shall be obliged to send for the police on your account," and she then closed the door and quietly locked it on the outside, leaving the lady from India to grumble to herself without the power of getting out.

"Wait till to-morrow! only wait!" she heard the skeleton cry as she departed to show Violet to another room.

The morrow came as usual, but no Violet was to be found.

She had left the hotel just as the gray dawn was beginning to steal over the silent London streets, resolved to work her fingers to the bone, or beg her way from door to door, rather than remain in bondage to one of her own sex so revolting as Mrs. McFerret Currie.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

ALL'S WELL.

WE must forgive Rose Royston if in the joy she experienced she thought of nothing else.

When, however, she awoke the next morning her thoughts reverted to her imprisoned friend, Violet, and she at once resolved to appeal to her kind-hearted uncle on her behalf.

The captain was now just in the humor to give his niece anything she desired within the limits of possibility; consequently, when she spoke to her uncle of Violet, and described her beauty and amiability, depicting eloquently her forlorn orphaned condition, and how dearly they loved each other, the kind-hearted old sailor was touched to the quick, and he at once gave Rose a *carte blanche* to bring her friend, and the whole school besides, if she wished it, to increase their limited family circle.

Rose threw her arms round Uncle Ben's neck and paid him with kisses from her rosy lips, and then started at once with Harry Targent for Meditation House.

Mrs. Hawk would have been most happy to have acceded to Miss Royston's request, she said, but regretted that Miss Leigh was no longer a member of her establishment, her aunt, Mrs. Flint Skinner, having removed her.

Much disappointed, they were returning, when they encountered Theodore Westlake on horseback.

The young gentleman, after the first greetings were over, said, smiling rather sadly at the happy countenances of his friends:

"I can see the course of true love runs smoothly with you at last."

"Yes, my boy, it's all right. We're hooked at last—aren't we, darling?" exclaimed his comrade, as he appealed to his fair companion.

Rose blushed, of course, and Harry said, inquiringly to Theodore:

"And now about yourself, old fellow. How do your *affaires du cœur* prosper? Is the paternal tide still against you?"

"No," returned Theodore; "oh, no. I have quite knocked the Elizabeth Skinner match on the head, and I believe dad will let me have my own way with respect to my true love; but, alas!" his voice grew sad and desponding as he added, "I can't find her. She has disappeared, and left no trace behind."

"Well, don't droop, my boy; I think I can tell you where she is."

"Where?" inquired Theodore, in an eager paroxysm.

"Mrs. Flint Skinner, her aunt, has removed her from Mrs. Hawk's academy."

"What?" exclaimed the anxious lover; "is it possible that Victoria Laton is her niece?"

"Yes, and the probability is that she has carried her off into the country with her."

"Of course she has!" cried Theodore, as he hastily turned his horse's head. "A thousand thanks for your information. Good-by."

"Well, but stay; where are you off to in such a hurry?" called Harry after him.

"Skinner's Pride, Cornwall, to find my darling," cried Theodore, as he galloped off; but in a few days he returned, weary and depressed.

"You have not found her, I fear?" was the first question Harry put to his friend.

"Found her?—no!" returned Theodore, irritably. "A pretty wild-goose chase you've led me."

"My dear fellow, I——"

"Didn't you tell me that Mrs. Flint Skinner was Victoria's aunt and guardian, and that she was with her in the country?"

"Yes; but——"

"But I went there," interrupted Theodore, impatiently, "and asked very civilly, considering I stood on thorns, and was in a fever of anxiety besides, if I could see Miss Victoria Laton. To my great surprise Mrs. Flint Skinner freezingly informed me that she knew nothing whatever of any such person, so I have come back as wise as I went."

"Well, you've only yourself to thank for it, old boy," said Harry, smiling.

"Myself! What do mean?"

"Why, you wouldn't stop when I called after you, or I should have told you that there is no such person as Victoria Laton."

"Not; why, didn't she——"

"Oh, yes, I know she called herself so, just as I called myself Humphrey Tadpole, and my little gypsy here called her elf Becky Battle, when she was Rose Royston all the time. But the real name of your lost *inamorata* is Violet Leigh. If you had asked for her by that name you would probably have found her."

"I'll return at once; I can catch the night train," cried Theodore, starting up excitedly. "I can't live in this anxiety."

"Well, hang it!" exclaimed Harry, "take something before you start, or you'll collapse on the road."

"My dear fellow," returned the anxious lover, "I can neither eat nor drink till I have found my poor girl. I am terribly afraid something has happened to her."

"Oh, no, not so bad as that, Dore," replied his friend, consolingly. "Well, then, since you're resolved to go, I'll accompany you to the station."

It was growing dark as they emerged from the gate of Orion Villa.

The sky was heavy with dense clouds, and large drops of rain were beginning to fall.

"We shall have a storm, I fancy," remarked Harry; "hadn't you better wait a little?"

"Not I!" returned Theodore, recklessly; "though I do not wish you to get drenched on my account."

"I'm fond of water," laughed Harry. "Come on!"

At that moment a vivid flash of forked lightning darted across the heavens, followed by a tremendous clap of thunder.

Then, as if by a preconcerted signal, the rain began in earnest, and poured down in torrents.

The young men struck into a by-lane which branched into the main road, where the trees afforded a shelter, and hurried along, each apparently occupied with his own thoughts.

Presently, at a turn in the lane, they came to a spot where two narrow paths met, and where a turnstile reared itself.

On the other side of this a bright light was perceptible.

As they drew nearer, it was found to proceed from the bull's-eye of a policeman's lantern: and on their arrival at the spot a constable was directing its rays on to a female form that lay upon the ground close to the hedge.

"What's the matter?" they asked.

"The body of a woman, it seems," returned the official; "struck by lightning, I'm afraid."

"Poor thing!" exclaimed the newcomers, pityingly.

"Let us see," continued Theodore; "direct the light into her face as I raise her."

Stooping down, he clasped the insensible form and lifted it gently in his arms.

The powerless head fell back as though it had been lifeless, and the policeman remarked:

"It is a woman, and a very pretty one, too."

At that moment Harry and Theodore recognized the face simultaneously.

"Violet!" they exclaimed, in surprise; "is it possible?"

Instantly Theodore Westlake was clasping her to his heart, begging her, in the tenderest accents, to answer him, by her voice, that she still lived.

But to this appeal she was insensible.

"She is dead! she is dead!" cried her agonized lover. "Oh, speak to me, darling, one word!" he ejaculated, imploringly.

He loosened her dress from her fair, white throat, and clasped her hands, and kissed her pale lips, and then, almost despairingly, laid his hand upon the region of her heart.

"She is not dead!" he cried, joyfully; "I can feel her heart beating. She will live yet."

The constable came running up at that juncture with a small flask of brandy, for which he had been dispatched.

Theodore bathed the forehead of the insensible girl, and moistened her lips with the spirits, and in a short time his efforts were rewarded, and with a faint sigh Violet opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she cried, faintly; "don't take me back; don't! Let me go!"

"You are safe, darling," murmured Theodore, tenderly, "safe with me. Don't you know me?"

She recognized his voice instantly, and turned her eyes inquiringly upon his.

"Theodore!" she exclaimed; and then added, with a sigh of relief, as she sank into his arms, "yes, yes, I am safe now."

In a few moments she was able to stand, and the storm having abated, the party slowly retraced their steps to Orion Villa.

It was with unspeakable joy that Rose Royston once more pressed her beloved friend to her heart.

Nor was the happiness less on the part of Violet, who, under the inspiring influences that surrounded her, rallied wonderfully, and there bid fair to be a second night of intense joy at the villa, in spite of the storm without.

[To be continued.]

"Wild Rose and Violet" was commenced in No. 605.

ORVILLE AND DAN;

Or,

Adventures in Japan.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK,

Author of "Keep Your Bounds," "Inventive Ben," etc.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONSUL MAKES CHEESEMAN FONT UP.

ORVILLE and Dan glanced at Cheeseman and his companions; then, having made sure of the captain's identity, noiselessly closed the panel.

"We are in a nice fix," whispered Dan. "This all comes of your harebrained toward that organman. It's rough, just as we are getting interested in the country, to have to go back to slavery."

"We ain't *there* yet," quietly replied Orv. "You may be sure Benkei is not the sort of young man to give us up. Didn't you see how innocent he pretended to be when Cheeseman asked him where we were?"

"I was too nervous to pay much attention," said his brother. "Resistance is out of the question; we've got to give in."

"Upon my word I thought you knew better, Dan," said the other. "Hush, here comes Benkei."

"Boys," said the latter, entering the room and silently closing the door, "Captain Cheeseman is in the temple, and vows to take you, dead or alive, so I have told him you are here."

"What?" cried Orv; "we expected you would help us and not give us up."

"Oh, gently, gently, my young friend," replied the bonze, rolling his eyes in a comical manner; "don't be in such a hurry to condemn me. I'll bring in the American Consul, and we'll chat the matter over. I suppose you are in no hurry to renew your acquaintance with that old Aino, Captain Cheeseman? Leave this to me; I'll pull you through."

When Benkei had quitted the room, Orville shook his head and murmured:

"I don't see how he is going to do so much for us."

"Gentlemen," said their host, opening the door and introducing the consul, "permit me to present you to the Reverend Mr. Goodheart."

"Boys," said the sorrowful, after saluting them, "your captain had informed me of your leaving his ship, and yesterday an Italian came to me and stated you were living in this temple. Being desirous of rescuing you from your present position, I thought it better to come here. Understand, I carry no weapons, nor do I make any threats, and I must say I was surprised at the intemperate expressions I just now heard used by your commander."

His manner was both gentle and sincere, and greatly impressed the boys in his favor, so they told him the truth and begged he would not compel them to go back to the ship.

Then Cheeseman was summoned, and they repeated their stories in his presence; upon hearing which he used very bad language, and said they had spoken falsely.

"That will do, captain," calmy observed the consul. "I order you to give these lads their discharge and to pay their wages."

"I don't owe 'em anything," snapped the bully. "They are not on the ship's articles."

"Then I shall fine you fifty dollars in each case," said the official. "The United States law directs that all persons employed on board sea-going vessels flying the national flag shall be entered on the articles (official muster-roll of the ship's crew) and receive pay for their services."

"They were only passengers, who had agreed to work out their board and lodging," snarled the skipper. "You consuls have got too much power."

"I do not wish to have any words with you," was the gentleman's calm rejoinder. "Before I give you permission to leave Hako-date harbor you will pay the fines and give those boys their discharge; the money will go to them;" and, turning to the brothers, he said: "Now, my sons, you must come with me and remain in Hako-date until I can send you home."

"Excuse me," exclaimed Orv; "if we are *not* sailors we must be *private* citizens. As there are United States law against our traveling through the empire? The Japs move about our country just as they please."

For a moment the official was puzzled, but presently said:

"You are right about not being sailors, and if you have money and do not create a disturbance, you can go where you please, though, if you take my advice, you will proceed home by the first opportunity."

"Here, let me out," angrily observed Cheeseman; "I've had enough of this."

When the bully had retired, Benkei said:

"Allow me to make a suggestion. Suppose you, my friends, go to Hako-date with the consul and receive your papers and money, remain over the Fourth of July with him, and return here when our festival is at its height?"

"That's a good idea," nodded Dan, glancing at the official; "we are ever so much obliged to you, sir, for advising us to go home; however, now we are in Japan, we want to learn something of its industries. Father is in the woodenware business,

and we may pick up a lot of ideas that will be useful. We mean to travel with our eyes wide open and to carry the American flag through the entire length of the empire."

"Well," laughingly remarked the reverend gentleman, "so long as you honestly pay your way and obey the laws, there's nothing to hinder you from doing what you propose, but I warn you not to trust to the United States Government for protection. Japan is now in a state of change from barbarism to civilization. In one place you will find all the modern improvements, and in another, within a mile from the first, people living after the style of their forefathers. At all events, you must come down with me to Hako-date, be legally discharged from your ship, and spend the Fourth of July at my house."

In half an hour from that time the brothers were on horseback, riding down to Mororan, Cheeseman sulkily lagging behind, and evidently angry at the boys' victory.

When they reached the port the party embarked on board the consul's yacht and sailed for Hakodate, arriving in that harbor early in the morning.

"Won't you come aboard and get your chests, boys?" snarled the skipper, as they landed on the wharf.

"No," interposed the consul; "you can send them off. I don't imagine they have any desire to visit you."

The lads followed him up to his house, and after they were introduced to his wife, he said:

"Would you like to have a bath?"

"Yes," they returned.

"Come, then," he cried; "we will walk along the way to my bathing-house and take a dip in the ocean."

As they passed through the busy streets they understood what their friend had meant by civilization and barbarism going side by side, some of the Japanese being dressed in American suits, patent-leather boots, white neckties and gloves, and stove-pipe hats, while behind them walked servants clad in the baseball costume of the boys' popis—viz., a waist-cloth and head-towel.

This spoke of this to Orville, and chuckled to see the care with which the native swells handled their thin umbrellas and squinted through their eye-glasses.

"Yes, it's comical," chuckled Orville, pointing to a grand club-house, by the side of which was a palm-thatched Japanese cook-shop, where a good meal of rice could be had for a quarter of a cent. "See what it says over that swell place—' Antonio Francatelli, from Delmonico's, New York. Terms, for bed and meals, ten clean Mexican dollars per day.'"

"What does he mean by clean Mexicans?" asked Dan of the consul.

"Unclipped," said the gentleman. "They take trade dollars now."

"How very kind!" grinned Orv. "It's more than our American post-offices will do."

"Everything they saw was of the same mixed up kind, and the brothers comprehended there were two ways of living in the country—the native and the foreign.

After a brisk walk they emerged upon the beach and beheld the *Ocean Belle* anchored half way down the harbor.

"Good," they cried. "The men are hoisting out our chests!"

When the party had enjoyed a swim they returned to the consul's and breakfasted, thoroughly appreciating the homelike cookery and the society of their fair hostess.

"It's real nice to see an American lady again," said Orv. "You remind me of my sister, Nellie."

"And me of my sister, Rose," said Dan.

"I don't see how you can say that," remarked Orv. "Rose is a brunette."

"Well, Mrs. Goodheart has Rose's ways," retorted Dan, who was determined not to be shut up by his brother.

"You seem to be very fond of your sisters," observed the lady.

"Yes, madam," they simultaneously answered; "they are the best girls in the world."

"Excuse me, young men," said the consul, putting his head in at the door; "Captain Cheeseman is here, and wishes to return on board as soon as he can."

The boys bowed to their hostess, and following the speaker, found themselves in his office.

The business of paying the fines and discharging them only occupied a few minutes, and when Orville and Dan had examined the contents of their chests, they gave a receipt for the same.

"I leave to-day," growled the skipper, who looked as savage as a bear with a sore head.

"Now, Mr. Consul, will you kindly give me my papers. I came into this port in consequence of an accident, and have had nothing but bad luck since these fellows left me;" adding, as he scowled at them, "I hope you'll be chopped into mincemeat before you get half through the country. I'll make your uncle pay for this."

Orville was about to reply tartly, when Dan whispered:

"Schish, brother; leave him alone; we've got more than we expected."

"Yes, confound you," snapped Cheeseman; "you are going to travel through Japan *at my expense*."

CHAPTER XVI.

TURKEY AND ICE-CREAM.

THAT evening the brothers sat in the verands of the consul's house and watched the *Ocean Belle* sail out of the harbor.

"What do you think of Benkei now, Dan?" said Orv. "Here we are with nice clean suits on, and perfectly free of our old tyrant. If it hadn't been for Ben we should soon have been reduced to baroney."

"Say him and our kind friend, the Reverend Mr. Goodheart," answered the other. "I'll own Benkei behaved splendidly, but what could he have done if the consul had not been the man he is?"

"Anyhow, Ben's a level-headed fellow," remarked Orv; "I vote we ask him to travel with us."

"He can't leave the temple," said Dan. "I wish he could; we'd have a good old time in his company."

At that moment their host joined them, and, indicating the ship, observed:

"My young friends, it was very fortunate for you I was with Captain Cheeseman. Since I gave him his clearance papers I have discovered he has left the harbor without settling his bills. I shall pay them, and send them to the Custom House of the port to which he is bound."

"Yes; he's a mean, bad man," they murmured.

"Never mind," cried Mrs. Goodheart, from the dining-room; "come in and eat your Fourth of July dinner."

They took their places at the table, and when a blessing had been asked, the covers were raised, revealing a magnificent roasted turkey, cranberry sauce, sweet and Irish potatoes, baked beans and pumpkin-pie.

"This is a Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Feast-day dinner all in one," merrily remarked the consul. "I hope you boys have good appetites?"

Orv looked at Dan, then slyly answered:

"Yes, sir, we think we can do our share. We've lived on rice and tea for several weeks, so we think a good, square meal won't come amiss."

"Is that all you have had?" laughingly inquired the lady.

"We had some bear-meat," said Dan, attacking the contents of his plate; "but this reminds us of home."

They had a merry time, and conjured away the food in an astonishing manner, going steadily through the dishes and never halting until they had come to the pumpkin-pie, after which a servant brought in a bowl, and, placing it before their hostess, removed the lid and revealed a mass of ice-cream.

"My goodness!" breathed Orville; "have you got ice-cream for that, Dan?"

"Guess I have," was the answer. "Did you ever know a boy who hadn't?"

Considering their hearty meal, the lads did exceedingly well; even going so far as to have a second helping, thinking it would be some time ere they would have any more.

At the conclusion of the repast a number of American guests made their appearance, and they had a good time, their hostess playing the piano and they singing and dancing, the proceedings terminating with a grand display of fireworks.

On the following morning, when the brothers made their appearance at the breakfast-table, their friends had their heads powdered them to go home, saying a steamer would in a few days be up from Yedo, and from thence they could embark on board a sailing craft.

"You've no idea how many dangers you'll have to run on the other island," remarked the consul. "The Ronins and Jori will think nothing of cutting you into slices, the varioloid is raging in many provinces, the earthquakes are something terrible, the odor of the lacquer-tree and the varnish will poison you worse than ivy, and the roads are, in some places, infested with bandits, added to which, if you are sick, the native doctors will be sure to kill you."

"Well," laughed Orv, "our own physicians are not much better."

"Then there are kappas and sickle-weasels," slyly insinuated their hostess. "Come, you better decide to return to your parents and sisters."

"Goodness knows we'd like to go," said Dan, "but the old world laugh at us if, after putting our feet on the shore of Dai Nippon, we did not see something of the country; besides, we're under engagement to teach the national game of baseball to our teams in Iburi. We'll take a couple of suits to our teams in Iburi. We'll take a couple of suits of clothes and some garments from our chests, then express the latter on to Tokio, care of the American Minister."

"You better leave the matter to me and I'll forward them to the consul for you," said their host. "Let me see, you somethings, I yesterday heard that a regiment of soldiers will shortly be dispatched to the Temple of Iburi with instructions to seize the idols and other property, and it will be just as well you are not there when they arrive. Benkei will go home to Tokio, but the Emperor has refused to listen to his petition."

"That's all the more reason why we should keep our promise," said Orville. "When the bonzes are kicked out of their situation they'll be able to gain a livelihood by instructing their countrymen in baseball."

This remark made their friends laugh heartily, and finding the boys bent on going, they ceased to persuade them to the contrary.

That same Orville and Dan went aboard a craft bound for Mororan, where they arrived early in the morning, and, mounting the horses lent them by Benkei, galloped off to the temple.

They found the building surrounded by dense crowds of worshippers, who were loud in their regrets regarding its proposed destruction.

"Come," said Orv, when they had handed over their horses to the Ainos, "let's go and find Ben."

"Hello," said the latter. "I've won my bet. The white heads wagered a thousand cash you would never come back."

"They might have known better than that," laughingly remarked Dan, as the trio shook hands. "We left our flag here, and no American ever deserts that."

"You are just in time for first rice," said Benkei, leading the way to the refectory. "Same old bill of fare. I suppose you had something nicer in Hakodate."

"Yes," answered Orv; with a wink; "we had turkey, pumpkin-pies and ice-cream, though I suppose you wouldn't care for the first."

The young man rolled his eyes and whispered in Orv's ears:

"I never care for what I can't get," then motioned them to fall in, saying, "Wait till I change my profession, and I'll show you whether I won't eat turkey."

In a short time the bonzes came trooping in, and all of them expressed pleasure at once more seeing their friends.

"Business is rushing this morning," said Benkei; "the worshippers know this will be the last chance they'll have; besides, we've taken the wire screens off the images, and given the folks extra chances to worship."

When my uncle arrives we shall know how much longer we'll be able to keep up the game."

"Will the emperor take all the beautiful gold and silver things away from you?" inquired Dan, in Japanese.

Benkei did not reply to this, but after again rolling his eyes in a comical manner, laughed significantly, the rest of the bonzes repeating his gesture.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCES IN THE TEMPLE.

AFTER breakfast the boys went into the temple in order to witness the ceremonies, which were led by several ancient bonzes from other establishments; for, though Benkei had official charge of the building, he did not rank sufficiently high to conduct the services.

As the younger bonzes took their places the immense crowd of people which filled every nook and corner of the building prostrated themselves, and you might have heard a fly buzz, then the leaders began to chant: "*O-mi-tu-fu! O-mi-tu-fu!*" (O great Buddha.) This prayer was taken up by the Benkei and his brethren, and the effect was really impressive.

For over an hour this sound rose and fell in musical cadence, the smoke of incense poured out of a hundred vases, and at certain intervals metal bells and wooden clappers were struck, hearing which signals the worshipers rose or knelt, and knocked their foreheads on the matted floor.

"It's a strange religion, ain't it, Dan?" whispered Orv; "they have only one prayer, so there is no excuse for folks not knowing it."

"That's so," answered his brother; "they've no Sunday-schools, Sunday, or any service but this. No hymn or prayer-books, and no Bibles."

"No," said Orv; "theirs is a very simple sort of religion. They work like slaves for several months, then knock off for a week and come to the temple."

"The missionaries will teach them better," said Dan, adding, quietly, "When are they going to begin throwing spit-balls?"

"Oh, that ain't part of the regular service," quietly replied Orville. "Hush! they are going to make a collection."

At this the young bonzes rose, and each taking a canvas bag, began to circulate among the crowd of worshipers, who handed them various sums in cash, this business being kept up until nearly noon, and a contribution obtained from every one present.

"Come on," said Dan, "let us go outside; I've had enough of it."

"No," significantly replied the other, "we had better stay and give something. We don't want to be considered mean."

They each put a few cash in one of the bags, then quitted the building and made a tour of the encampment, which consisted of all sorts of shelters, from oiled-paper tents to portable wooden houses that had been brought from the cities in sections and put together by the Ainos, while mingled with them were shows of all descriptions, restaurants, cook-shops, barbers' establishments and tea-houses, where the guests were served by neatly-dressed waitresses.

"It's a regular circus, ain't it?" remarked Dan, as they wandered through the grove.

"Yes," chuckled Orv, "it's a Buddhist camp-meeting. The Japs are not so much different to ourselves, after all. What tickles me is they run down the Ainos so, when really they couldn't do without them. From all I saw in Hako-date the Japs boss the aborigines and treat them like dogs. It it was not for the hairy-faced men they'd never make anything of this island."

"That's so," answered Dan. "The Ainos cut timber and spars, and in fact do all the hard work, for which they get paid precious little, and are treated as though they had no rights a Jap was bound to respect. I think they haven't much sense, anyhow."

About two o'clock the worshipers came rushing out of the temple, shouting like children released from a long session at school, and in a few moments the eating-places were crowded with customers.

"Guess our rice and tea are ready," said Orv. "Hurry up, old man; I'm hungry."

"Well," said Benkei, addressing them in Japanese, "are you tired of waiting for something to eat? We have *misso* and *tofu* with our rice today."

"Glad of it," grinned Dan. "After turkey and ice-cream it's hard to come down to plain rice."

In another moment they were seated with the bonze and partaking of the new food.

Misso is made of white beans, pounded when raw into a paste and mixed with fermenting rice and salt, this mixture being placed in tubs and made until ready for use, when it has a peculiar, yeasty flavor.

Tofu is a white, delicate curd, made of beans, which looks and tastes something like corn-starch blancmange.

The boys liked the latter, but the *misso* proved too much for them.

"Who invented that awful compound?" demanded Orv of Benkei.

The good-tempered bonze picked up some of the spongy mass with his chop-sticks, and after smelling it approvingly, swallowed the delicacy and replied:

"It's an ancient dish of the Ainos."

"Oh, I thought we had met with it before," chuckled Dan. "They call it *tig-pu*. Theirs is stronger than Limburger cheese.

At the conclusion of their repast the lads accompanied Benkei to his room, and while he smoked, chatted with him.

"We didn't see the people throwing spit-balls," said Dan.

"Of course not," chuckled the bonze; "we were on the platform. You don't imagine we would permit them to fire such things at us, do you? Besides, it is not a part of our regular ceremonies;" then, motioning them to listen, he added: "There goes the bell for us to be at our posts. I shall be employed until sunset in writing prayers for the stupid idiots. Come, I'll take you into the temple by the private entrance."

When they arrived at the building the old bonzes were allotting positions to the younger, to each of whom they gave a bag for his money, a big pile of narrow slips of mulberry-bark paper, a small paint-brush (pencil) and a cup containing a sponge, moistened with Indian ink, upon receiving which, they squatted behind low tables, raised about three inches from the ground, and announced themselves ready for work, whereupon the Ainu guards removed the barriers of the portal and admitted the crowd.

Dan and Orv took their places by Benkei, and, as they had made rapid progress in learning the language, could understand nearly all that was said.

It did not take long to fill the building to suffocation, though, to do them justice, the people were quiet and good-tempered, and waited for their turn with great patience.

"I, Tosa, want to find a jar of money," said a brawny-looking Jap, throwing ten cash into Benkei's bag.

The young man gravely picked up one of the papers, on the top of which was stamped, "Oh, great Buddha," and wrote upon it, in a perpendicular line, "Tosa desires to find a pot of money," then handed the precious document to his customer.

Watch him, Orv," said Dan, as the man elbowed his way through the crowd and approached the platform.

Tosa crammed the scrap of paper into his mouth, fished it out again with one finger, worked it into a moist ball, and, taking good aim, discharged it at the big figure of Buddha, upon the bronze cheek of which it stuck like a white pimple.

In a short time the atmosphere about the platform was filled with flying missives, a few of which hit the mark, while the greater number fell short, and made their projectors feel anything but happy.

"Come away, Dan," growled Orv; "this is too absurd for anything. I wonder they don't use popguns."

"Ah!" sighed his brother, "the day will come when they'll see the error of their ways. It's perfectly awful to think they believe in such rubbish."

"Yes," nodded the other, "it is ridiculous. The way that wrinkled old woman closed her mouth, shut one eye, and fired her pellet was too comical for anything. I thought I should have laughed outright. When she found she had not made a hit she grinned worse than Miss Sally Nipper did when she drew a blank out of the grab-bag at our church fair."

"What's that fellow got there?" remarked Orville, pointing to an Ainu showman, who had spread an oilcloth upon the ground and was feeding something in a box.

As the brothers approached him he rapped on the box with his fingers, and out crawled a number of tortoises, which, at the word of command, proceeded to perform various evolutions, marching in single and double file, picking out numbers marked on paper, tapping and scratching a fan to a tune, and doing other wonderful tests.

"I thought tortoises were dull, stupid things," said Dan, in Japanese, as he gave him some money.

"Oh, they are like us Ainos," significantly answered the exhibitor; "they have more sense than people think."

At sunset the temple was closed, and the worshipers ate their third meal, then patronized the various shows and tea-shops, which were kept open until midnight.

For nearly a fortnight the place was crowded with men, women and children, some departing and others arriving; however, after the first few days the brothers ceased to take any interest in the proceedings, and devoted their entire time to acquiring the language.

On the sixteenth of July all the strangers had vanished, the grounds were cleared by the Ainos, and that evening the baseball clubs resumed their practice, the occasion being marked by the first match between the Danites and White-heads.

Just as they began to warm to their work the players suddenly uttered a cry, and all but Benkei seconded, the cause of the scare being the arrival of their venerable chief, who, gazing first at his nephew, next at the brothers, and finally at the retreating figures, solemnly inquired:

"What is the meaning of all this? Are you aware that the enemy approaches?"

"We did not know it, uncle," coolly responded Benkei. "We heard they intended to come some time," adding, as he presented his guests, "these are my American friends, Orville and Dan; they were teaching us to play baseball."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE AGED BONZE PRODUCES HIS TREASURE.

"BASEBALL," sternly exclaimed the venerable bonze. "How dare you be thus idling? It is to those Americans we owe our persecution! Until they came to this happy land Buddhism flourished, now the order has gone forth, Down with the temples and melt up the gods!"

"Uncle," respectfully murmured Benkei, "these are neither missionaries nor merchants, and you must not be angry with them. They have taught us to play baseball, that, now our occupation is gone, we may be able to earn our rice and tea."

"Nephew," he gravely returned, "you might have chosen a more *dignified* calling. Alas for Buddhism! things have come to an awful state when her bonzes have to *run after the ball in a field*."

saying which, he turned to the brothers and remarked: "You are not wanted here, and had better go home."

"Don't mind what he says," whispered Benkei, taking them aside. "Please retire to my room and I'll talk to him."

"All right," said Orv; "we understand."

It was quite dark ere their friend joined them. Meanwhile they had heard the Ainos moving hither and thither, as though carrying away loads.

"Poor uncle," said the young bonze, "he's half crazy over the Mikado's order. He was brought up in the Buddhist faith, and rose from the ranks to have charge of this grand temple, but during the late rebellion sided against the Emperor. He lays all this change to the Americans and English, and there's no getting him to take a sensible view of it. Of course you will keep secret what I tell you. We have loaded our Ainos with treasure and send them up into the mountains, and shall keep them at it all night. To-morrow, when the troops arrive, they will only have the copper idols for their pains."

"Is the old man well off?" inquired Orv.

"Yes, said Benkei; "he's as rich as he is stingy. I had no idea, until he took me into the treasure-room, how many gold ingots he had. I should think he must be worth a million in American dollars."

"Won't he give you any of it?" asked Dan.

"Not he," said Benkei, as he filled his pipe, "He has ordered it to be buried, and when the soldiers are gone, will convey it to the coast and take it to China, where the Government does not interfere with Buddhists. Of course he is my uncle, and has hereto furnished me with a home; still I think he ought to distribute a portion of his wealth among us fellows, who will now have to look out for ourselves."

"See here, my friend," said Orv, "why don't you go with us to Tokio? We'd admire to have your company."

"If you have no objection, I would like to go first-rate," he answered. "We've got to wait here until the Government official comes to give us our passports; if we don't have them we shall not be permitted to travel on the main road. Will you please excuse me? I have to look after those stupid fellows, the Ainos. Take my advice and get a good night's rest."

At daybreak the next morning the brothers heard the humming noise in the temple, and, peeping in, beheld the aged bonze conducting the service.

"Listen," said Dan; "isn't that music approaching? Let's go outside and see if it is the troops."

The temple and buildings stood upon an elevated plateau, overlooking Volcano Bay, from the shores of which they saw a cavalcade approaching.

First came the governor of the province, riding on a pony, the tail of which was tied up in a bag to keep it from the mud; then followed an officer carrying the Mikado's order, a flag-bearer, a brass band and about a thousand soldiers, the whole force being dressed in military uniform of the latest French fashion, and armed with American repeating rifles.

"See their flag, Dan," remarked Orv. "A red ball on a white ground. I guess we'd better show our colors or they might trouble us."

Having procured the Stars and Stripes from their room, they entered the temple and waited to see what was coming.

ORVILLE AND DAN.—"'I DON'T OWE 'EM ANYTHING,' SNAFFED THE BULLY. 'THEY ARE NOT ON THE SHIP'S ARTICLES.' 'THEN I SHALL FINE YOU FIFTY DOLLARS IN EACH CASE,' SAID THE OFFICIAL."—SEE PAGE 262.

Meanwhile the bonzes were kneeling before the platform with their foreheads pressed to the ground, as motionless as though made of wax.

"Halt!" cried the officer in command of the troops, speaking in English. "Present arms! Ground arms! Stand at ease!"

"Just listen to them," whispered Dan.

"Hush!" said Orv. "See, these bonzes are playing possum and pretending not to hear."

As he spoke, the governor of the province and the colonel ascended the main steps, entered the temple, and addressing Benkei's uncle, who was trussed up on the platform, said, in Japanese:

"Are you in charge of this establishment?"

The old gentleman did not condescend to reply, but remained with his forehead pressed to the boards; finding which, the official twice repeated his question.

The situation was very comical, and evidently amused the colonel, who, presently turning, noticed the boys, and advancing to them, said, in English:

"Good-morning, young gentlemen. How came you here?"

"We are studying your manners and customs," smilingly replied Orv. "You speak our language remarkably well."

"Yes," he said; "I was three years in a military school in England," with which he screwed a glass into his left eye, and gazing helplessly at the governor, observed to him: "Aw, by Jove! what are we going to do with these persons?"

"Wait a moment," said the official, who likewise spoke English, and advancing to the old bonze, he remarked, in Japanese: "It is no use your playing the fox and pretending not to hear. If you do not receive me like a gentleman I shall hand you over to the military."

This speech had a wonderful effect upon the aged man, who rose, descended from his position, pretended that he had been absorbed in his devotions and unaware of their presence, and, prostrating himself before them, inquired their business.

"It is this," said the governor, producing a scroll rolled upon an ivory stick; "I am ordered to deliver this document to you, and see you obey its instructions."

By that time all the bonzes had crawled along the floor, and, kneeling, were in a semi-circle behind their chief, who, half rising, pressed the edict to his forehead, unrolled and slowly perused it, then turned to his people and said:

"This is a command from Mikado-sama (his Imperial Majesty) Mutshuito Tenno, (the one hundred and twenty-third Mikado of the empire). I am by it directed to relinquish my temple and its treasures to the governor of our province. I obey, and you make no resistance."

"That is right," exclaimed the governor. "The Mikado is always sorry to employ force. First of all, you must hand over your treasure."

"There are our treasures," solemnly answered the patriarch, pointing to the bronze idols. "They are worth a large sum."

"I mean your *money*," sternly observed the governor. "Come, do not trifle with me; produce it."

The boys noticed Benkei's eyes twinkle, while his uncle fumbled in a wallet that hung from his girdle, and producing ten worn cash, gravely held them up at arm's length, the rest of the bonzes performing the same pantomime.

"We are poor, most powerful governor," whined the old man. "Do you think we are brigands who have gold?"

"Colonel," said the official, "I leave this matter in your hands."

CHAPTER XIX.

A WARM RECEPTION IN HONDO.

WHEN the governor had given charge of affairs to the colonel the latter ordered a number of soldiers into the temple, and bade them make prisoners of the bonzes, then turning to Orville and Dan, said:

"Gentlemen, have no anxiety about yourselves. I look upon you as my guests. I have a brother who is being educated at Harvard College, and shall be most happy to show you any attention."

The boys thanked him, and waited to see what would come next; meanwhile the bonzes were still kneeling.

Five after file of soldiers marched into the temple, and at the word of command dropped the butts of their rifles upon the matted floor, following them being a deputation of Ainos, who, prostrating themselves in front of the governor, requested permission to make a statement.

On this being granted their leader spoke, still keeping his head to the ground.

"Great mightiness, we have long been slaves to these haughty bonzes, who have made us contribute to their support, and in fact built this temple with our blood, a vast number of our ancestors having died in erecting it, for which they never received one cash. For unknown years we Ainos have been as water in our master's hands, but now our time of triumph has arrived. If you will follow us we'll show you where the gold and treasures of the temple are concealed."

As he uttered the last sentence Benkei's uncle groaned, while, regardless of the official's presence, the young bonzes chuckled, all being glad at the exposure of his secret.

The governor requested the colonel to take a body of his troops and accompany the informers, then addressing the kneeling ones, said:

"The Emperor has instructed me to order you to return to the place of your birth, where upon presenting certificates that will be given you by my secretary, you will each receive a hundred thousand cash (ten dollars), with which you can enter into business. You are warned, if you join any of the temples still in existence in the empire that you will be decapitated. Now retire. I will attend to you later."

Benkei's uncle piteously inquired if he would not be allowed a larger bonze than his subordinates, and in reply was told he might consider himself lucky in being permitted to retain his head.

The bonzes withdrew and the brothers were about to join them, when the governor, who had seated himself upon a camp-stool, brought in by one of his attendants, requested the boys to remain, remarking:

"I hope you will not think we are too severe with these people; they all deserve to be executed."

"Oh, they are harmless enough," boldly answered Orv, who did not like to hear his friends abused. "Why are you so down upon them?"

The gentleman lighted a Manilla cigar, and when his people had brought in more stools, begged the lads to be seated, then said:

"If one of my own countrymen asked such a question I should feel angry, but knowing you do not wish to offend, I will explain matters. We have lately suffered from civil war, the Shogun (head of the army) being desirous of ruling the Emperor and making him a mere puppet. We Shintos, who accept the Emperor as the King of Heaven, rallied round him, and after several years' fighting, conquered the Shogun and put an end to his power."

"But what has that to do with the Buddhists?" inquired Dan. "They are not warriors."

"I know that," answered the governor. "When we were struggling to put down the rebellion, the Buddhists preached against the Emperor, and helped the Shogun with men and money, and now peace is proclaimed, desire to remain unmolested. We are not foolish enough to give them another chance; and among other reforms have determined to abolish their religion and compel them to become Shintos."

"Will you kindly do us a favor?" said Orville. "We're a particular friend among these bonzes, and would like to have him travel with us to Tokio."

"Certainly," replied the governor; "I will give him a passport. What is his name?"

"Benkei," said Orv; "he speaks English as well as we do, and is a real clever fellow."

"Benkei!" murmured the governor. "I know him. During our trouble he rendered some of our fugitive officers a great service, and the Emperor has directed me to send him to Tokio (Yedo), so you can go together. Now I understand why you have staid here. Yes, Benkei is a very worthy young man."

Quite a pleasant conversation followed, and the brothers explained how they had initiated some of the bonzes in the art and mystery of baseball-playing.

"That is a good idea," observed their new acquaintance. "We taught you Americans our national game, polo, and you instruct us in yours."

"Polo!" cried Dan. "I thought that was invented by James Gordon Bennett."

"By no means," smilingly returned the governor. "We call it *Da-kin*, and our ancestors played it two thousand years ago. We received the game from our gods."

THREE BOYS.—"'THERE'S JUST TWENTY LEFT NOW,' SAID PAT, AS HE HELD UP THE CANDLE AND COUNTED, WHILE SOL GAZED AT WHAT HE HAD ON THE FLOOR."—SEE PAGE 286.

"Are there any of the old scores in existence?" gravely asked Orv. "The New York *Herald* would pay a big price for one. It publishes the account of all the polo-matches."

The official responded good-humoredly, and summoning his servants, bade them serve breakfast.

In a few moments a number of attendants entered, laden with trays containing bowls of fish, flesh, fowl, vegetables, fruit and rice, and copper kettles filled with hot *saké* and tea.

Orville and Dan noticed that their host squatted upon the floor to eat his food. He was not sufficiently Americanized to use a dinner-table.

The change from rice and tea to such a repast was very welcome to the lads, and they did ample justice to it."

As they finished, the colonel returned with his men and a large body of Ainos laden with treasure, which consisted of the old bonze's gold bars and some small gold and silver images.

After the troops had eaten their rice orders were given them to empty the temple of its Buddhist deities and decorations, and Ainos were sent upon the roof to remove the copper symbols, which they did in a very workmanlike manner; meanwhile Orville and Dan sought out Benkei, whom they found mournfully gazing upon the motionless form of his relative.

"Is he dead?" whispered Orv.

"Yes," sighed the young bonze. "Poor uncle! He has what you term passed in his cheeks. He was pretty tough, but couldn't stand being offered a hundred thousand cash like the rest of us. Probably it is just as well he's gone. He was a regular old-timer, and broke because he could not bend."

That afternoon the remains of the patriarch were burnt, that being the custom with regard to bonzes, and at the conclusion of the obsequies his people were summoned to the temple, where they knelt in a double line before the governor, who thus addressed them:

"The *Tenno* (emperor) has commanded this temple to be purified and handed over to the Ainos, and I, in addition to the gift, will give each of them who live in my province a present of five hundred thousand cash."

On hearing this announcement the poor, down-trodden Ainos gave vent to a cries of joy, and after the officials and bonzes had quitted the building, mounted upon the platform and indulged in a wild sort of dance.

The next morning the bonzes received their papers, and Benkei was given a good sum in Japanese paper money, and permission to accompany his friends to Tokio.

The boys and their companion took leave of the governor and colonel, and started for Hako-date, on their way to the shore meeting a long procession of soldiers and Ainos, laden with treasures from the temple.

The Reverend Mr. Goodheart welcomed them, and after they had rested themselves and written letters home, they went on board a small steamer and started for the main island.

The trip across did not occupy many hours, and at sunrise they stepped on shore at Awomori, the chief town of Kikuoku.

"What's yonder?" exclaimed Orv, pointing toward a house from the roof of which extended a wire that was carried upon bamboo-poles far into the interior.

"It's the telegraph office," quietly replied Benkei.

"Oh," groaned Dan, "what's the good of expecting to learn anything in Japan, when the first thing that meets our gaze is an electric telegraph office? You are too civilized altogether. We ought to have come here a hundred years ago."

As they were laughing over this incident, Dan happened to push against a savage-looking fellow who had watched their landing with a malignant scowl.

This man did not wait for any explanations, but drawing his sword from his belt, attacked the boy from behind, his first blow cutting him from shoulder to hip. [To be continued.]

"Orville and Dan" was commenced in No. 457.

THE DISTRICT TELEGRAPH BOYS.

WE now proceed to publish the portraits and biographies of a number of the best boys among the American District Telegraph Messengers.

One of the best messenger-boys ever in the service of the company was William Rooney, who received a gold medal for helping to detect and punish two notorious swindlers. He was but sixteen years of age, but evinced qualities which would have done credit to a man of forty. These swindlers, called R. R. Naylor and Charles N. Fisher, sent Rooney to get a forged check cashed, February 6th, 1878, but Rooney, suspecting mischief, called a police officer, and the swindlers were arrested. Rooney is seventeen years of age, and lives with his mother at No. 56 Barrow Street. He was appointed a sergeant among the boys, but left the company's employ shortly after to enter upon a mercantile career.

TIMOTHY D. O'KEEFE.

Among other "remarkable boys" in the employ of the American District Telegraph Company is Timothy D. O'Keefe, formerly Messenger No. 80, now assistant manager in charge of District Office 239 Broadway—nights. This trustworthy and efficient youth was born in London, England, on the 2d of

February, 1863, and came to this country with his parents in 1869, settling in New York City. He then entered Grammar School No. 14, in East Thirty-seventh Street, where he pursued his studies until the year 1871, when he entered the service of the American District Telegraph Company as messenger. After going through the different grades—messenger, clerk and sergeant—he was appointed to the managership of the First District Office, 33 and 35 Bridge Street, on the 14th of July, 1875. He filled that position until January 16th, 1879, when he was made assistant manager at 68 Fulton Street, which is an office of a higher grade and pays more salary. He was again promoted on the 19th of February to his present position, viz.: assistant manager of 239 Broadway—a first grade office.

About four o'clock on the morning of November 30th, 1873, when O'Keefe was messenger at the 1206 Broadway office, a number of imperfect signals came in from the instrument of W. L. Strong, 25 West Thirtieth Street, a dry-goods merchant, and were responded to by a patrolman of the company and O'Keefe. But owing to a doubt existing in the mind of the patrolman as to where the signals came from, he left O'Keefe and went to another house. This left Timothy all alone, and when he arrived at 25 West Thirtieth Street, he commenced vigorously to ring the bell. After a little delay the door was opened by a man, and when O'Keefe asked him if he called 'Police,' he answered, in a gruff manner:

"No, I didn't call 'Police!'"

O'Keefe's suspicions were aroused immediately, and when a few moments afterward a man rushed out of the front-door, he knew that he had a burglar to deal with, and encouraged by the shouts of Mr. Strong, who by that time had got to the second-story window, O'Keefe darted down the street after him until he got to Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street, where the fugitive turned upon him and threatened to shoot him if he followed him another step. O'Keefe made no answer to his threats, and the burglar threw down a silk handkerchief, in all probability thinking that Timothy would pick it up and be satisfied that the property stolen was recovered; but in this he was badly mistaken, for instead of picking up the handkerchief, O'Keefe ran after him with increased speed, and soon caused him to be captured by a police-officer. The officer took the burglar back to the house of Mr. Strong, who identified him as the man who entered his house.

The prisoner was well known to the police authorities as an old offender, and a few weeks afterward, in the Court of General Sessions, he was sentenced to a term of years in the State Prison.

This brought young Timothy to the notice of his superiors, and he was complimented very highly at the time by the Vice-President. After this, as related above, his promotions were numerous.

O'Keefe's father died in 1869, and his mother died in May, 1877.

W. H. CUSHING.

Still another noteworthy boy is W. H. Cushing, born in Dutchess County, N. Y., January 30th, 1863. At the age of five he entered Public School No. 31, in Monroe Street, N. Y. City, from whence he was promoted to Grammar School No. 12, in Madison Street, where he remained until the year 1870, when he was found in the third class of the Grammar Department, at the age of eight. To the regret of his teachers he was removed by his parents to the school of the Christian Brothers, in Pitt Street, where he was immediately placed in the second class. His name soon became widely known among his new masters for his smartness and his mathematical brain. Having remained one year in this class he was then promoted, and jumping over the first class, we find him in the Fall of the year 1871 in the "Superior," or highest class in the school, not yet ten years of age. Here he remained for nearly five years, year after year studying and practicing in the higher branches of study—geometry, algebra, philosophy. Having acquired a fair knowledge of all these, he was removed from school early in the year of 1876, at the age of fourteen, leaving his teachers in the same state of mind that he left those of the other school six years before. On May 11th, 1876, we find him putting in an application for position as messenger-boy with the American District Telegraph Company, and on Friday, May 12th, he could be seen with a smiling countenance on his way up Broadway to the office he was stationed at, which was the Nineteenth District, 946 Broadway. Here, soon, the manager of the office began to take a lively interest in him, and wrote many complimentary letters to J. S. Ashburst, then Superintendent of Messenger Department, in regard to his activity and good will, and through his influence he was promoted to fill the position of clerk in his own district, on the 9th of September, 1876, after having played his part well for nearly four months in the position first assigned him. But he was not destined to remain there long, for the Superintendent, whose office was in the rear of the Nineteenth District, soon became attached to him, and took him in as his own clerk on Christmas Day, the 25th of December, 1876.

Here he soon became liked by his employers, as he was in olden times by his teachers, and having served faithfully for over a year under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent, his salary was increased, and he was removed, January 8th, 1878, from the Superintendent's office to fill the position of bookkeeper to J. H. Hingle, Superintendent of Supplies.

On June 20th of this year circumstances again compelled him to be removed, and he was placed in the Auditor's Department, to serve in the capacity of clerk, where he still remains, working his way through life as best he can, and doing everything in his power to please his employers, whose highest esteem he has already gained, and leaving a record behind him in the annals of the company without a blur on its face.

Cushing is also one of the most efficient telegraph operators of the A. D. T. Co.

WANDERING WILLIE.—"THE SERPENT TIGHTENED HIS COILS ROUND THE MAN'S BODY, AND WILLIE COULD HEAR HIS BONES CRACK."

WANDERING WILLIE;

Or,

Lost in the Bush.

The Adventures of a Missionary's Son in the Wilds of Africa.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE SERPENT'S JAWS.

THE Reverend Mr. Hill, of whom we have been talking ever since this story commenced, though we have not seen him as yet, was in a pitiful plight.

He had incurred the resentment of Benguela and the priests because he had succeeded in converting the queen to Christianity, and they feared that the king would be the next to succumb to his influence.

If that happened, a new religion would spring up in the kingdom, the magicians would find their occupation gone, and the idols would be overthrown in the Sacred Grove.

This prospect induced Benguela to exert every nerve to stop the progress of the new heresy.

We have seen how he estranged the king from the queen, and how his hatred to her culminated in her assassination in her prison.

Birdie was languishing in the blood-stained dungeon.

The king was more than ever the slave of the magicians.

Mr. Hill was a captive in the mysterious recesses of the Sacred Grove, where the invisible Idol Kungoe a Banza was installed.

King Urinza's army had met with a check in its invading progress, and the White Chief, as they called Wandering Willie, had been captured.

This was the situation.

No wonder that Benguela had cause for rejoicing and considered that his spirits were fighting for him.

To do the man justice, in spite of all his claptrap and humbug, he believed in his idols.

He, in his dense ignorance and crass superstition, really thought that the hideous creations of wood and stone which the Kasongas had erected were the mediums of communication between mortals and the spirit world.

Though Urinza's troops had been beaten back, Benguela did not consider the war over.

He knew what a desperate woman Queen Jumah was, and that she would sacrifice every warrior in her country before she would give in.

It was rumored that Jumah was hurrying up with reinforcements, and intended to push the war to the bitter end.

She had organized a corps of amazons, or female soldiers, at the head of which she put herself.

When these arrived the struggle would be intensified.

Meanwhile, Benguela drilled the Kasonga army, made certain sacrifices, and prepared for the worst.

He could not spare time to go to the Sacred Grove, but he gave secret instructions concerning Willie and his father to a confidential priest named Mockanna.

This fellow was of a cruel and truculent disposition, delighting in bloodshed.

When Willie arrived at the confines of the Sacred Grove, he was taken possession of by Mockanna, who drove him before him with a whip made of twisted cowhide, every stroke of which drew blood.

The Grove was composed of trees of luxuriant foliage, and led to a clearing in which the temple of the idol and the houses surrounding it were erected.

Willie was pushed into one house or hut in which there was no furniture.

It was devoid of everything.

Mockanna blew a horn.

Instantly four men, clad in white vestments, who belonged to the first or most private and privileged Order of the priesthood, appeared.

These seized and threw him on his face.

Then with cords and pegs they staked him firmly to the ground.

He was unable to move, and, what was more disagreeable, he could not see what was going on around him.

Presently a beautiful white elephant, which is very rare in Africa, and so rare in Siam that it is an object of adoration to the benighted people who worship it, was brought in.

The noble beast was driven about the hut, being prodded with a goad.

It was evidently the intention of the priests to get him to tramp upon Willie.

For some reason or another he would not do this.

Whenever he approached the recumbent body of the boy he stepped over it.

For half an hour Mockanna endeavored to make the white elephant crush little Willie to death.

Seeing that he would not do it, they led him away, making a loud trumpeting, which was echoed far and near.

Willie was released from his disagreeable position.

"Boy," said Mockanna, "you have undergone the ordeal of the white elephant, and it is not the wish of the idol that you should die in that way."

"Glad to hear it," replied Willie.

"It matters little. You have a more terrible death in store for you."

"But I don't want to die."

"It is your fate to die young."

"Why not spare me?" asked Willie.

"You were captured in arms against the Kasongas."

"Is that punishable by death?"

"Always; and if we had not that against you it is only necessary to add that you are a Christian."

"Yes," said Willie, boldly; "and I will never be anything else."

"Are you sure?"

"Perfectly."

"I ask you," said Mockanna, "because if the white elephant spares an intended victim it is our custom to ask him if he will become a priest, and spend his life in the service of the sacred idol."

"If so, what then?"

"We spare his life."

"If I understand you rightly," said Willie, "I am to purchase my life by abjuring my religion?"

"Exactly."

"Then you need not waste any more of your eloquence on me."

"Reflect."

Willie began to sing. "A Methodist I was born and a Methodist I will die."

"You refuse my offer?" exclaimed Mockanna.

"Most decidedly," replied Willie.

A gleam of savage pleasure lit up the priest's eyes.

He wanted the boy to die, and would have been annoyed if he had accepted life on the terms he offered.

"By to-morrow's dawn," said Mockanna, "you shall be fed to the sacred serpent."

"The serpent!"

"Ay."

"Oh! kill me in any other way," cried Willie, in an agony of apprehension.

"Impossible."

"But should the serpent spare me?"

"He will not be as merciful as the elephant, for he has had no food for a month."

Willie gave himself up to despair.

"Come," continued Mockanna, grimly.

"What are you about to do with me now?"

"To-night you will spend on your knees before Kungoe a Banza."

"The sacred idol?"

"Yes."

"I will not kneel to your idol," replied Willie, proudly.

Mockanna bent his vengeful eyes upon him.

"You will not be respited."

"Never?"

"Then we will torture you until your limbs refuse to support your body, and you will bend, a crushed and bleeding mass, before the holy idol."

Willie knew this was no idle threat.

He did not wish to be tortured out of all semblance of humanity, so he reconsidered his determination.

If he knelt to the idol, it would be under compulsion, and he thought he would be forgiven.

"You need not torture me," he said.

"Very well," answered Mockanna; "come with me."

He led the way to the temple, which was guarded by two chained lions.

The lions were tame and knew Mockanna, who threatened them with his whip, and they slunk on one side.

Had a stranger approached they would have torn him to pieces.

Entering the rudely made hut which served as the home of the idol, they found that it occupied nearly the entire space.

It was a hideous construction of wood, having the body of an elephant, the legs of a man, and the head of a giraffe.

The circumference was about twenty-five feet, and being hollow, it could have held half a dozen men.

Strange stories were told in Kasonga of victims being imprisoned in its body, and left to starve to death.

"Down on your knees," said Mockanna.

Willie sank down in compliance with this command.

The sun was setting in the west, and it would soon be dark.

At dawn of day he had to die a horrible death.

"Will you not give me some food?" asked Willie.

"No," was the harsh reply.

"I am faint and hungry."

"You cannot be permitted to eat in the presence of Kungoe a Banza."

"At least give me some water."

"I must not."

"Have you no heart, no pity, no compassion?"

"It is fitting that a sacrifice should die fasting," replied Mockanna.

Willie groaned in anguish of spirit.

"Be careful not to move," continued Mockanna. "I shall visit you at frequent intervals, and you will

TIMOTHY D. O'KEEFE, MESSENGER-BOY OF THE AMERICAN DISTRICT TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

W. H. CUSHING, MESSENGER-BOY OF THE AMERICAN DISTRICT TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

be punished if you attempt to leave the temple. The lions will tear you to pieces."

"One death is as good as another," replied Willie. "If your lions kill me I shall not be food for your snakes and perhaps I shall die of hunger and thirst before morning."

Mockanna made no answer, but glided from the apartment with a stealthy tread.

The boy remained on his knees just where he had been placed.

It may be readily imagined that he did not pray to the idol.

His prayers were offered in a very different direction.

His aspirations were of a higher nature, and after praying for some time he found that consolation which the idolater and the infidel can never know.

The true believer is always comforted, in even his hour of deepest affliction, when he feels that his prayers are answered, or at least heard.

Gradually it grew dark.

As the shades of night closed around the Kungue a Banza the huge and hideous idol possessed a strange fascination for him.

The shadows deepened.

He could not take his eyes away.

Suddenly he heard a deep groan.

What could it mean?

His flesh crept, and his hair stiffened on his head.

Again he heard the same sepulchral sound.

Springing to his feet, for he was a brave boy, he determined not to be frightened.

Perhaps, after all, it was only a trick of the magicians to alarm him.

He had heard of such things being done.

The light was rapidly dying away.

If he would solve the mystery he would have to act at once.

Walking around the idol, he scrutinized it carefully.

In the rear he saw what appeared to be a door, which opened into the back of the awful Kungue a Banza.

What did it matter if he did investigate the mysteries of this prison-house?

He was doomed, anyway.

To look upon the idol was death, and he did not expect any mercy from the servants of Benguela.

Yes!

He was not mistaken.

There was a door, rudely constructed, in the back of the idol.

It was fastened by a bolt on the outside, and with a nervous energy he shot it back.

"Within there?" he cried.

"Help! help!" replied a faint voice.

"Is there any one inside?"

"All that is left of a man who has been without food and drink for three days."

"You speak English?"

"Why should I not, since I am an American?"

Willie's heart beat so fiercely that he could not control its pulsations.

His brain seemed to be on fire.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"A poor missionary in the hands of savages, an humble follower of our Lord and master. Who are you?"

Surely Willie knew that voice.

He could not be mistaken.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"When I lived at Manasquan, New Jersey," replied the man inside the idol, "I was known as Mr. Hill; now I am nothing—nobody—a half-starved wretch waiting for death."

"Father!" exclaimed Willie.

"What do you say?" asked the faint, weary voice.

"Father!"

"Who calls me father?"

"I, Willie your son."

"Oh, God!"

There was silence after this, as if the poor prisoner was exhausted, and could say no more.

The son had found his father at last, but under what circumstances!

They were in the hands of their enemies, and death stared them both in the face.

"Can I believe what I hear?" said Mr. Hill. "Is it really my son who is speaking to me, or does some pleasing delusion mock me?"

"It is no delusion, father."

Mr. Hill's voice sounded low and hollow, as if he was away down in the depths of the idol.

"Can you help me up?" he asked.

"Stretch out your hand."

The missionary did so and Willie grasped it, succeeding after some exertion in hitting him to a level with the door.

After this it was comparatively easy to drag him into the hut.

There was still light enough left to enable them to see one another.

Willie was thin, pale, and sunburnt.

His father was greatly altered since he had seen him last, his body being emaciated, his cheeks sunken, his eyes hollow, his hair long and quite gray, while his lips were bloodless, showing how suffering had told upon him.

"My dear boy," said Mr. Hill, throwing his arms round Willie's neck and embracing him, "this is more joy than I had any right to expect. It is too much delight to embrace you before I die, but God has heard my prayers."

"Did you wish to see me?"

"It was my constant prayer night and day."

"And mine!"

"How did you get here?"

Willie briefly informed his father of all that had happened since his mother's death.

Mr. Hill was deeply shocked at hearing of his wife's accident, but his own condition was so all-absorbing that it did not affect him as much as it would have done under other circumstances. So he said:

"She's gone, poor creature; she was a good, faithful, devoted wife; but it is better so."

"How long have you been a captive, father?" asked Willie, holding his hand in his.

Mr. Hill sighed deeply.

"I can keep no track of time," he replied. "But I guess I have been a slave in this temple at least four months."

"Why were you put inside the idol?"

"To starve to death. It's a way they have of sacrificing to their heathen deity; but you have a still more dreadful death in store for you."

"We must not die," replied Willie, earnestly.

"How can we avoid our fate?"

"I know not, yet it seems so hard to part after this meeting."

Mr. Hill patted his boy on the head.

"You are a good lad," he said, "and you will have your reward hereafter."

"I want my reward here," replied Willie. "If Ujiji was would only conquer these heathens, we might make a Christian community of them."

"Alas! I have little hope. I am resigned."

In fact, Mr. Hill was so weak and dispirited that he had few thoughts left of earth.

Weak in mind and body, he longed for his heavenly rest.

The only thing which had momentarily roused him was the unexpected meeting with his beloved son.

After talking until they were tired out they sank to sleep on the hard, dry earth.

The heat was terrible, and there was not the slightest ventilation in the idol's temple.

When morning came they were roused by the entrance of Mockanna.

He found the wretched father embracing the unhappy son.

With a kick of his foot he woke them up.

"So," he exclaimed, angrily, "you have been busy during the night!"

Both Mr. Hill and Willie endeavored to reply, but they were unable to do so.

Their lips were parched and dry.

Owing to their long fast, the absence of water, and the extreme thirst it created, their tongues clove to the roof of their mouths.

Mockanna took hold of Mr. Hill, and as he was nothing but skin and bones, handled him as easily as if he had been a child.

He dragged him to the door in the back of the idol and pushed him inside.

Willie had not the strength to prevent him.

When he had accomplished his task he seized hold of Willie.

"Let me die with my father," cried Willie.

"Is that your father?" asked Mockanna.

"Yes."

"You will die separately!"

He took Willie by the arm and led him away.

As he departed he heard the cavernous tones of his father, saying:

"My son! my son!"

The sacred serpent was a boa-constrictor of enormous size, and was kept in a house near the temple.

It was fed entirely on human beings, a man, and sometimes two, being given him every month.

The house in which he lived had no door, but only an opening at the top of the roof.

This was approached by a ladder.

Mockanna took Willie up this ladder and opened the trap.

He then put a rope around his waist and lowered him into the serpent's den.

In spite of his inherent bravery Willie could not repress a shudder.

He had always had a horror of snakes.

Down, down, he went, until his feet touched the floor.

The trap-door was shut, and Willie was alone with the serpent.

His feelings can be better imagined than described.

The hut was dimly-lighted by means of some apertures in the sides, and in time his eyes got accustomed to the peculiar light.

He crouched up against the wall, and saw in one corner of the hut a huge snake coiled up in a heap.

Its eyes were fixed and glassy, as if it was fast asleep.

It showed no animation.

Willie wondered when it was going to wake up and eat him.

Half an hour elapsed and Willie awaited his fate.

All at once the trap-door opened at the top of the hut and Mockanna again appeared.

He had in his hand a long pole.

It seemed he was anxious to have Willie disposed of as soon as possible, for he began to stir up the snake with the pole.

The huge reptile uncoiled itself, and its dull eyes began to glisten.

Somehow, Mockanna lost his balance, and fell headlong into the hut.

He struck right upon the boa-constrictor.

The snake took one look at him, and then with incredible rapidity cast its coils around him.

Mockanna shrieked at the top of his voice.

"Help! help!" he exclaimed.

Willie, however, did not feel disposed to render him any assistance, nor could he have done so effectually if he had wished.

He was unarmed, and could not attack the snake except with his hands and feet.

This would have been of little avail.

Willie would gladly have assisted Mockanna if he could, for though the latter was his bitter enemy, he believed in returning good for evil.

It seemed to be a fitting retribution that the magician should partake of the fate he had assigned for the boy.

The serpent tightened his coils round the man's body, and Willie could hear his bones crack.

It was horrible.

The screams of the poor wretch were heartrending, but no one came to his assistance.

It was known that the snake had been provided with a victim, and the attendants on the idol, who were scattered about the Sacred Grove, thought it was Willie who was crying out.

At length Mockanna was dead.

The boa uncoiled its body and began to cover the magician with a thick slime.

When he had done this he gradually swallowed him.

Willie was afraid that Mockanna would not be enough for the serpent, and that he would devour him for a second course.

In this expectation he was mistaken.

The reptile coiled himself up again, and, thoroughly gorged, went off to sleep, to digest his food.

Hope now beat high in Willie's breast.

He saw he was in no danger from the serpent, and he looked around for some means of escape.

Being agile and active, he contrived to climb up the side of the house, and, hanging on to a rafter, gain the trap-door, which the miserable Mockanna had left open.

No one was to be seen.

Descending the ladder, he once more breathed the free air of heaven.

It would have been easy to fly now.

Not a soul was near to stop him; but he did not attempt to escape.

He would not leave his father.

With a quick step he advanced to the Temple in which the idol Kungue a Banza was housed.

The lions began to roar.

Taking up a stick he threatened them, as he had seen Mockanna do, and they let him pass without doing him any injury.

Once inside the temple, he advanced to the idol, opened the door in its back, and called to his father.

"Father! Come out," he said.

"Who calls?" was the reply.

"I—Willie."

Speedily Mr. Hill raised himself up, and Willie dragged him out of the depths of the idol.

In a few words he explained all that had happened, at which the missionary was as much delighted as surprised.

They were both suffering terribly from hunger and thirst.

Casting a glance in front of the idol, they found that, in accordance with the custom of the Kasongas, a substantial offering of food and water had been that day placed in the Temple.

It consisted of goat's meat, chickens, rice and corn, all nicely cooked.

Of course the idol never used this food. It was consumed by the head priests.

Mr. Hill and his son did not hesitate a moment in devouring the food and drinking the water.

This gave them renewed strength, and they began to turn their attention to escaping.

Quitting the Temple, they passed the lions without any mishap, and at once made for the shelter of the trees.

Mr. Hill was very weak.

He could not travel quickly, and frequently had to lean on his son's arm for support.

"Where are we going?" he asked.

"I know not," replied Willie. "We are free, and that is all I care for."

"True, but if I may be allowed to advise you," said Mr. Hill, "I——"

"Advise me?" interrupted Willie. "Why, your judgment, father, must be superior to mine."

"I am glad to hear you say so," replied Mr. Hill.

"What is your advice, father?"

"I should travel in the direction in which I thought King Urinza's army is."

"Excellent!" said Willie. "We will do so."

He at once altered his course and traveled in a northwesterly direction, which he thought would most likely lead him to the camp of the Matamas.

With them they would be safe.

Suddenly Willie was startled by the sound of a footstep behind him.

"Ha, we are followed!" he cried.

Mr. Hill stopped abruptly.

"Heaven help us!" he said.

"Amen!" echoed Willie.

The next instant an arrow whistled past his head and buried itself in the trunk of a tree.

[To be continued.]

"Wandering Willie" was commenced in No. 604.

THREE BOYS.

A Story of a High School.

By WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE next day was Sunday, and should have been a day of rest and peace to all Bunkerville.

So it was to a part, at least, of the population.

The six little Siggers, with their papa and mamma, voted those fish the best they had ever eaten, and when they all set out for church the reverend gentleman wore none the less a smiling face when he thought of those two stuffed partridges quietly doing themselves brown in the oven.

He preached an excellent sermon.

"That's the fish," said Sol to Van, in a whisper. "He hasn't got to the birds."

"He'll get to 'em. Wonder how Doctor Betts feels?"

Doctor Betts, impatient man, had tried a broiled partridge for breakfast, and he told Mrs. Porrance so as they were coming out of church, and he added:

"We mean to have the rest for dinner. You may tell your young friends I never ate finer ones, and I am greatly obliged to them. They're a pair of promising boys, madam."

"Partridges?" muttered Mrs. Porrance to herself, in astonishment, and quite loudly, as the doctor bowed and went smiling by. "What can he mean? Partridges!"

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Porrance. Did they not tell you? Two such beautiful birds they left with me, and such a splendid string of fish. They brought them to the door themselves. Was it not kind. You may thank them again for me. I didn't say half enough, I'm sure."

And little Mrs. Sligo paused for breath, just as two of the deacons' wives pounced upon her to ask some questions about the meeting of the Dorcas Society that week, and Mrs. Porrance permitted herself to be swept down the aisle by the crowd and out of the church-door.

There was something in it all that she could not begin to understand; but there was worse to come, for the "other" church, nearest of three or four on the green, was just then disgorging its own congregation.

What could possess that odious, meddlesome, overbearing Mrs. Belden to come down the walk toward Pat Nolan's landlady with so serene a smile of amity?

Could it have been meant for benevolence?

Certainly not.

An effort at negotiation with an ancient enemy? No. It was too placid for that.

"My dear Mrs. Porrance, I hope you are well today? So kind of you to think of us. They were very fine fish——"

Something a good deal like a flash of lightning shot across the mind of Mrs. Porrance, and she rallied for the trial before her, like the brave old widow that she was, with three unaccountable boys on her hands.

"Oh, the fish? Do not speak of them, please. Some our boys caught. They enjoy it so. I like to be neighborly. Is Mr. Belden well?"

"Quite well, thank you. And Mr. Sligo? I do hope his congregation will keep up. Did I not hear you feared you would lose some of your best members?"

"Did you? A great mistake, then. Mr. Sligo was never more popular. Why don't you get Mr. Belden to go a-fishing? He'd like it. Besides, that would be one way for him to imitate Peter and the rest."

"I think I will. It would suit him exactly. He's the best of men."

"No doubt. Ah, there are my boys. Good-morning, Mrs. Belden."

"Good-morning."

That was pretty good "fencing" for two elderly females of rival churches, but Mrs. Porrance got through without helping Mrs. Belden out of her puzzle.

Her own was all gone. She now knew where Pat Nolan had delivered his fish, and she began to tell him so the moment she got into the house.

"The wrong place, was it?" ruefully exclaimed Pat. "Then it was Sol's fault. I'll go for them fish this minute, and I'll have 'em back here—unless, ma'am, indeed, they may have eaten them."

He started for the door with so strong a semblance of being in earnest that Mrs. Porrance fairly shouted after him:

"Stop, Pat. Come back. Go for them? Do you s'pose I'd have them know it was a mistake? You stupid fellow!"

"That's it, ma'am."

"Never mind. I won't say any more about it. Not to you."

The others were just then coming in, and Sol Rogers was promptly "cornered" as to how he came to send Pat to the wrong place.

"Wrong, was it? Oh, no, I guess not. Sligo had enough. We thought Belden might like 'em."

"But you did not ask me?"

"Never thought of it. Neither did Van. I'm awful forgetful when I'm around giving away my fish."

"And the partridges? What did you and Van give them away for, instead of bringing them home?"

"I don't know. Was there any reason, Van?"

"No, guess not. In fact, Mrs. Porrance, we never thought of being asked for any. At least I did not myself."

"You did not?"

"Certainly not. Sometimes I may bring my game here, sometimes not. It's for me to say which."

And Van turned away with the air of a man of thirty bored with a useless piece of business.

Even Sol was astonished. He had not given Van credit for as much as that, overlooking the fact that Van was absolutely right.

Mrs. Porrance did not. She was too cute for that. She saw her blunder, and it only made her more and more wrathful over the events of the day. Well was it for Almira that there was nothing especial for her mother to find fault with that afternoon and evening.

"Van," said Sol, as they reached their room, "you spiked her guns."

"Did I? Well, I mean they shall stay spiked. She won't ask any more questions of that kind. At least she won't ask them with that tone of voice and that look on her face."

That was what was the matter.

Mrs. Porrance had tried on a bit of "authority" in the wrong spot, and it had broken all to bits. A great many strong-minded people make that very mistake, and they are curiously apt to make it with boys of that sort and that age.

And Van Rivington had not told Mrs. Porrance a word of one other thing.

Mrs. Belden had met him and Sol on her way across the green, and she had said to them, with a much sweeter smile than she had given Mrs. Porrance, the larger half of it going to Van's share rather than Sol's:

"They were beautiful fish. If you ever again have more than you know what to do with——"

"Oh, we will know where to send them," politely responded Van.

"I have thanked your landlady already, but it is only fair I should thank the fishermen. Do you go for for them?"

Van told her several good places for fishing, and Sol added:

"Yes, Mrs. Belden; but if I were you I'd never take the trouble to go for them myself. I'd send a couple of academy boys."

"They're not all polite enough to go. We would be glad to have you come and hear Mr. Belden preach. You'd scarcely care for our sewing society, I suppose?"

"Rather go a-fishing," said Sol, shaking his head; but the minister's wife only laughed and walked on.

So it came to pass that Sol and Van, and Pat, too, for that matter, began to find themselves very well known boys in Bunkerville. They were making friends as well as enemies, but it was yet too soon to say which way the balance was turning. The Hinckley crowd was a pretty numerous one, and they had busy tongues of their own.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MRS. PORRANCE felt herself to be a woman of too much importance to quarrel with a "parcel of boys" about either birds or fish, and she felt sure she had lost nothing in the good opinion of her neighbors.

Her daughter, however, was a different being, and for several days she looked out of her curls at Sol and Pat with eyes of anything but admiration. As for Van, he was too good-looking, and his father was reputed to be too rich for a Bunkerville hostess to be very hard on him.

During that time, too, owing to extra care in handling the pump, but little milk, not enough to speak of, had been wasted on the floor of the milk-room. Almira was sure she missed some from the pans, but not so much as before, and the count of her eggs was all right.

It was so much easier for the boys to collect "rent eggs" from the neighbors' hens at the barn.

There was another shock coming, however, and one fine morning Almira sailed into the kitchen from her visit to the hen-houses with:

"Mother, one of 'em's gone!"

"Gone? Nonsense. Are you sure he went to roost last night?"

"Sure as I'm alive; I locked them all in. He was one of the best of the lot. Just right for a Thanksgiving rooster."

"You don't tell me! Well, it's of a piece with that milk-room. I'll lock it myself, as I did that, and we'll see."

"The milk goes yet, if the eggs don't," whimpered Almira.

"I don't believe it. Why don't they take one when they take the other? I'll fix it so they can't get in."

She was as good as her word, but the trouble was that nobody wanted to get in.

A bit of an "air-hole," not more than a foot square, that no human being could ever have crawled through, was quite enough for the genius of Sol Rogers.

A stick with a running noose at the end of it had been all the fate Almira's feathered fatling required. The noose went over his poor head. It was drawn tight with a jerk. The next moment, unable even to squawk, he was pulled through the little window and it was "all day" with him.

"Stealing is wicked," said Sol, as he wrung the neck of that unlucky fowl, "but we've paid for this one a good many times over. About half the chickens in that coop belong to us, of right."

"We'll only take 'em one at a time," said Van. "I care more for mince pies than I do for chickens."

There was likely to be a bigger mystery around the hen-house than even the milk-room itself.

Meantime, the preparations for the Sligo donat'on party went on at a comfortable rate.

Mrs. Porrance was just the woman to make pie-meat go as far as the laws of cookery would allow. The apples and dough were her own, and she could rightfully put in as much as she pleased. If her allowance, therefore, was set down for her at twenty pies, and if, as was the case, the butcher were at all liberal with his beef, the donat was sure to run over in a way to leave a handsome remainder on the swing-shelf in the cellar.

The donation was set down for Monday evening of the following week, so that there was plenty of time for operations after baking-day. And the boys had begun their work in good season.

Van worried a little over the lock of the cellar-door.

"They go in on the inside," he said to Sol, "and they don't often open this outside affair. If they did, though, Mrs. Porrance'd wonder why the old lock doesn't creak."

"Have you tried it?"

"Of course. The oil has soaked in well, and it runs as easy as a satin noun. The key I bought for it of old Martin didn't need much filing to fit it."

"It's worse than milk, or eggs, or chickens. Don't you think so?"

"Not a bit of it. The donation won't suffer. We must have some kind of game cocked for that. We can have it done up at the tavern and sent over cold. These are our pies."

"When we get 'em."

"We'll get all we want of 'em. She's cutting us down worse than ever just now."

"Won't I be glad when she kills her pigs!"

"Won't she sell the pork?"

"A good deal of it. But all the valley kills its pigs about the same time, so there's a good deal she can't even give away. We'll get all that."

"We can eat it."

"Yes," said Sol, "all she doesn't corn, in one way or another."

That was on Friday, and the boys had announced their intention of going to the hills the next day.

For reasons of her own, Mrs. Porrance had very cordially offered Pat his time to go with them, and half astonished them all by adding:

"You'd better take one of the ponies and the old buggy. You can go as far as you please, then, and you won't get so tired coming home."

She received the heartiest kind of thanks for that, but when the boys returned to their own room Sol exclaimed:

"Isn't she cute? She's put a mortgage on us."

"A pony mortgage," said Van.

"Yes. She means we shall feel under obligations to bring all we get right here."

"Oh, we'll do the right thing by her. She'll be paid for the pony if we have any sort of luck."

"But how about the pies?"

"The pony business hasn't anything to do with them. He can't eat mince pies."

"He's a good one, though. It'll be ever so much better than begging lifts and catching rides."

"Well, it will."

The widow and her daughter had had a hard day's work in their kitchen, and they not only went to bed early, but they slept soundly.

The former, indeed, lay awake for a few moments after she went to bed, counting over her pies, remembering how carefully she had looked up everything, and hoping the boys would bring home as much as possible the next day; but just as she got to the question as to whether she would prefer fish or partridges, she dropped off into a heavy slumber.

She did not afterward have so much as a dream concerning the fate of the pies she had so carefully locked up.

That, too, when Almira was almost in a night-mare about the hen-roost and milk-room.

A very excellent cellar was that of the Widow Porrance.

It was long, deep, dark, cool and dry. It extended the entire length and width of the main part of the house, and the swing-shelf in the centre ran very nearly from end to end of it. The flight of stairs down from the dining-room had a locked door at the bottom and another at the top. It was as safe as safe could be but for one thing.

That was the double sloping door at the top of the steps leading to the outer air. This, too, should have been safe, with its hasp and padlock without and its iron bolt within.

Mrs. Porrance had not a doubt of it, but she might have felt differently if Van Rivington had shown her what great things a key would do for the lock, and a bit of wire, through a crack, for the bolt.

She had not so much as examined them, or she might have wondered who had wasted so much good oil on them.

"Boys," said Sol Rogers, as they began to pull the rope ladder out of its hiding-place, "are we sure just how many of those pies are due to the donation?"

"Twenty," said Pat. "I've heard 'em say it half a dozen times."

"Then that's all we must leave her. The rest are ours."

"It's our duty," said Van. "It's a matter of conscience. We mustn't let her make anything out of old Sligo."

"Nor out of us, either, if we can help it. Silence, now, Pat, you and Van talk too much. Why can't you imitate me?"

They held their tongues, at all events, even after they found themselves on the grass below the window.

It was a dark night, but Van insisted on their closing the cellar-door behind them.

"A candle doesn't give much light," he said, "but the neighbors might be curious. We won't light up till we get inside."

If they had been so many cats they could not have been more stealthy and noiseless, till they all stood under the swing-shelf.

It was beyond their reach.

"How'll we ever work it?" said Pat.

"You mount on my shoulders and hand 'em down to Sol. Leave her twenty."

"Can you hold me up?"

"Long enough for that. Quick!"

Van did not overestimate his strength of legs and shoulders, and the other two were just the boys for the work.

"There's just twenty left now," said Pat, as he held up the candle and counted, while Sol gazed at what he had on the floor.

"And here's eleven. What a wicked old woman!" whispered Sol.

"Down with you, Pat. We must put back the pies," said Van.

"What for, then?"

"We've never paid for any plates. It's the pies are ours. That's all."

"Honesty is the best policy," remarked Sol; "but we won't mash 'em. We'll carry 'em to our room first. We can bring back the plates."

That was so, but it required no little nerve and coolness to get all that choice plunder safely up the rope-ladder. That done, it was easy to slide the pies off upon sheets of buttered writing-paper and pack them away in Sol's trunk, along with the other mysteries of their cooking apparatus.

"Mean'll eat too many to-night," said Van, "or we'll have no luck to-morrow. I wish we could wash the plates, but we can't."

And they did not, but they put them all back in good order on the swing-shelf, and Van even took a broom along and carefully obliterated every trace of their footsteps.

It cost him no end of trouble to slide the inner bolt of the cellar-door again, but he made out to do it, and so left as big a puzzle behind him as he knew how.

"Wonder what sh'll say to those empty plates?" said Pat, between two mouthfuls of pie, after the job was done and the rope ladder drawn in.

"She won't see 'em for a day or two, and it 'll be too late to say much to them," replied Van. "She and Almira won't be at home to-morrow, after we get away, and next day 'll be Sunday."

"We'll have mince-pie for lunch in the woods, anyhow," said Sol; "and they won't be donation pies, either."

"No," said Van, "we're left all those in the cellar. But we must send our share to Sligo. He doesn't get any too much to eat. Country ministers never do."

There is no denying it, those three boys did an unusual amount of first-class dreaming that night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THAT was a splendid Saturday morning, and Mrs. Porrance very kindly had breakfast earlier than usual, although she gave no reason for the special interest she seemed to be taking in the expected supper.

As for the boys, dreams or no dreams, they had been ready since before daylight, and the pony, with the buggy behind him, was already hitched in front of the door.

Once upon a time, it may be, that buggy had had a top to it; but now, alas! it was only an open wagon, with a seat in the middle, and plenty of room for guns and game.

"The very thing for us," Van had said. "We could almost run it through the woods."

Their careful counsels had settled the day's geography a little uncertainly.

They were to try Ragged Gap, or the neighborhood thereof, for pigeons or any other game. After that they would drive straight to a bit of a lake at the foot of the mountains, and see what they could catch.

They had no notion of setting out for home before sunset, and small care as to how late it might be when they should get in.

The drive out was a rapid one, and the pony seemed to enjoy it, for he had had little to do of late, and was a likely sort of a fellow.

When they reached it, they turned at once into the old wood-road that led to the old log-house, and were not a little surprised by the tokens of occupancy which greeted them when they came out into the clearing.

"Settlers here," said Sol.

"No game, then," replied Van. "We'll make the best of our way to the lake. May shoot something there."

"Faith, it's a queer place to settle in," grumbled Pat; and so it was, but neither the settlers nor their doors were on the premises just then.

Perhaps because they had something better to attend to.

The lake was but three miles further, and the road to it was only half as bad as it might have been. The boys were able to bring their buggy within watching distance, and unhitched their pony for a feed and a rest.

It seemed to them as if they had never before gone at a day's fishing quite so much as a matter of business, but they took care to load their guns before they began.

"What's that you're putting in that cannon of yours, Pat?" asked Sol.

"Only three or four loose buckshot I had in my pocket. There's not enough of them to hurt anything."

It ought to have been a fair day for fish, but they came a trifle slowly at first, except the "pumpkin-seeds," and there were only too many of them.

"Slathers of 'em," said Sol.

"They're a nice fish," said Pat; "but they're coming along too easy."

"Never mind, boys," began Van, but just then a sound of something crashing through the underbrush on the hillside behind him made him exclaim, "Hist, boys! What's that?"

"Something bigger'n a squirrel," said Sol. "I'm ready, if it's an elephant."

Pat Nolan's long-barreled concern was at his shoulder in an instant, and his rod and line lay by him on the grass with a fine perch flopping at the hook of it.

In a minute or so more the mystery was solved, as a very respectable-looking buck came bounding out from among the trees and halted for a wild look at them, a little beneath and at great distance.

Bang! bang! bang! but the bird-shot would have been of small service against such game if it had not been for the heavier bits of lead in Pat Nolan's charge.

These, indeed, went "clean home," and the buck gave a convulsive spring toward the water.

Poor fellow! He staggered heavily before he reached the margin, and even the "number sixes" in the second barrels were good enough to finish him with, as he sank and Van rushed forward.

"Cut his throat," shouted Sol. "They always do that, and mine's a long blade. Sharp, too."

Not very scientifically done, but well enough, and the boys were so ungovernably excited by their unexpected adventure that they did not let go of that buck till they had dragged and hoisted him into the rear end of the buggy-box.

"Somebody was chasing him."

"He must have got away, then."

"Haven't heard any dogs."

"Lost the scent, may be."

Just then the sound of distant baying came faintly to their ears, and before long it drew nearer and nearer, till at last a couple of panting hounds dashed in sight along the trail of the deer they were not to "run down."

If he had reached the little lake and swam across it he would have been safe from them, and he was, therefore, fairly the game of the three boys.

The hounds seemed to think so, for, after smelling and lapping around the spot where the buck had fallen, and whimpering at the buggy and its contents, they sat down and howled for a moment dismally.

"They'll bring their owners," said Sol.

"Can't help that," coolly remarked Van. "There'll be venison at the donation party if we have to take in some dog-meat with it. Load up."

"Sure and you're a captain," muttered Pat, as he did so.

And then he proceeded to remove the perch from his hook and throw in again.

"There won't be any more deer, but there may be some fish."

The other two promptly followed his example, and it was a good twenty minutes and more after that, with half a dozen fine fish pulled in, before the "owners" came in sight, even more completely out of breath than their dogs had been.

They were the squatters of the old log-cabin, and an angry pair were they, when the facts of the case dawned upon them.

"What are you doing with our deer?"

"Haven't seen any of your cattle of any kind," remarked Sol Rogers. "What do you mean?"

"We don't run down deer for boys to murder, we don't."

"I wouldn't, then, if I were you. Keep your dogs away from our deer, that's all."

"None of yer sass."

"Look here," said Van Rivington, rising to his feet. "What on earth do you mean? Do you claim that buck?"

"Well, we do."

"Claim it, then. My name's Rivington. I'm good for it. But you lay a finger on anything in my buggy I'll send a constable after you."

That was pretty well for a boy of fifteen, but he evidently meant every word of it, and Pat and Sol sat on the grass with their guns across their laps in a way that did not offer the slightest encouragement.

The two squatters looked at the boys and at one another.

A constable was just the sort of man they did not care to become too well acquainted with.

Then they looked longingly at the buck in the buggy.

"Tell you what," exclaimed one. "If you tellers 'll give us a fore quarter, we'll butcher it all up for 'em and call it square."

"All right," said Van; "we'll go it."

"What kin you boys do with the hide? We can use it now."

"You can have that, but the horns are ours."

"That's a bargain, then."

And at it they went with their bowie-knives, in a way that looked as if they had cut up venison before.

"It's all right, Van," said Sol. "You're captain. Saves us trouble."

The squatters were as good as their word, and as soon as their job was done they were off, dogs and all, leaving the boys to their fishing.

It took a good deal of steady nerve to go on with so quiet a set of business, after such an achievement as bringing down a deer, but Van insisted, and their several "strings" grew rapidly, only the large fish were a trifle scarce on them.

"Time!" shouted Van, at last. "We've a good distance to drive, and it won't do to rush the pony."

Time it was, and a proud trio were they, as they drew nearer and nearer the streets of Bunkerville.

"The donation, Van," said Sol. "We mustn't change our minds."

"I move we do the big thing, boys."

"How's that?" asked Pat.

"Only take home the fore-quarter that's left. We'll have the whole haunch roasted at the tavern and sent to Sligo's for a cold cut. It'll make 'em open their eyes."

"Think of the pies, Van."

"If we hadn't paid for 'em before, we're doing it now."

And so they drove in, straight to the door of the village tavern, where the story of their luck brought around the buggy not only the landlord but a swarm of idlers and a storm of hunting talk.

"Goin' to sell it to the widder's, I reckon?" asked the landlord.

Van explained his wishes and asked what the expense would be.

"What'll I charge you boys to cook a haunch o' deer-meat for Parson Sligo's donation? Wall, if that ain't heavy! Charge ye! I say, now, it will you wait till I send in my bill. I'll hev it sot up for ye in prime style. You see 'f I don't. You're a lot o' young bricks, you are. It's a tip-top haunch, too. Hope it's goin' to be a good huntin' season."

"All right, then," said Sol Rogers. "We're going to eat the rest of it."

"Are ye? Wall, I hope so. But you've ketched more sunfish 'n anything else. They ain't a bad brile."

"Good-night," said Van, and Pat gave the pony the reins.

Every one of them was in doubt as to how Mrs. Porrance would regard the disposition they had made of their game, but they did not rightly understand, as yet, the manner of woman they were dealing with.

She heard them all through while she was punching that fore-quarter of venison and examining the fish.

"Left it at the tavern to be roasted, you young scamps! Afraid I didn't know how, I suppose? Well, if I couldn't beat any cook they've got! But you're only boys. I hope they won't spoil it."

As if so clear-headed a woman as the widow would have opposed the sending of a "cold cut" to the donation of her own minister. What really stung her was that so fine a present was not to go from her own house, but there was no good way of saying so.

Even Almira could only repeat after her mother: "I hope it won't be spoiled." And the latter added:

"The fish 'll be fine for breakfast. The pumpkin-seeds. We'll bring on the rest at dinner-time."

(To be continued.)

"Three Boys" was commenced in No. 553.

OUR GUNNER'S SHOT.

AN INCIDENT OF OCEAN LIFE.

OUR noble ship lay at anchor in the Bay of Tangier, a fortified town in the extreme northwest of Africa. The day had been sultry, with a gentle breeze sweeping to the west; but toward the close of the afternoon the sea-breeze died away, and one of those hot, oven-like, atmospheric breathings came from the great sunburnt Sahara.

Half an hour before sundown the captain gave the order to the boatswain to call the hands for swimming exercise, and in a few minutes the forms of our tars were seen leaping from the gangways, the nettings, bowsprits, and some of the more venturesome took their leap from the arms of the lower yard.

One of the studding-sails had been lowered into the water, with its corners suspended from the main yardarm and the swinging boom, and into these some of the swimmers made their way. Among those who seemed to be enjoying the sport most heartily were two boys, Tim Wallace and Fred Fairbanks, the latter of whom was the son of our old gunner; and in a laughing mood, and with the highest spirits, they started out from the studding-sail on a race.

There was a loud shout of joy on their lips as they put off, and they started through the water like fishes. The surface of the sea was as smooth as glass, though its bosom rose in long and heavy swells that set in from the Atlantic.

The vessel was moored with a long sweep from both cables, and the buoy of the starboard anchor was far away on the starboard quarter, where it rose and fell with the swell of the ocean like a drunken man. Toward the buoy the two lads made their way, Fred Fairbanks taking the lead; but when they were within twenty or thirty fathoms of the buoy, Tim shot ahead, and seemed likely to win the race.

The old gunner watched the progress of his son with pride; and when he saw him drop behind, he leaped upon the poop, and was on the point of urging him on by a shout, when a cry reached him that made him start as if he had been struck by a cannon-ball.

"A shark! a shark!" exclaimed the captain of the forecastle. And at the sound of the terrible words the men who were in the water leaped and plunged toward the ship.

Right ahead, at the distance of three or four cables' length, a shark wake was seen in the water, where the back of the monster was visible. His course was for the boys.

For a moment the gunner stood like one bereft of sense; but the next he shouted at the top of his voice for the boys to turn back; but the little fellows heard him not.

Stoutly the two swimmers strove for the goal, unconscious of the fearful danger that hovered so near them. Their merry laugh still rang out over the waters, and at length they both touched the buoy together.

Oh, what drops of agony started from the brow of our old gunner! A boat had put off; but Fairbanks knew that it could not reach them in season, and every moment he expected to see the monster sink from sight, and then he knew that all hope would be gone.

At that moment a cry reached the ship that went through every heart like a stream of fire. The boys had discovered their enemy! The cry started old Fairbanks to his senses, and, quicker than thought, he sprang to the quarterdeck.

The guns were all loaded and shotted, fore and aft, and none knew their temper better than he. With a steady hand, made strong by sudden hope, the old gunner seized a priming wire, and pricked the cartridge of one of the quarter guns; then he took from his pocket a percussion water and set it in its place, and set back the hammer of the patent lock.

With a steady, giant strength the old man swayed the breech of the heavy gun to its bearing, and then, seizing the string-lock, he stood back and watched for the next swell that would bring the shark in range. He had aimed the piece some distance ahead of his mark, but yet a single moment would settle his hopes and fears.

Every breath was hushed, and every heart in that old ship beat painfully.

The boat was yet some distance from the boys, while the horrible sea-monster was fearfully near. Suddenly the air was awoke by the roar of a heavy gun; and as the old man knew his shot was gone, he sank back on the combing of the hatch, and covered his face with his hands, as if afraid to see the result of his efforts, for if he had failed he knew his boy was lost. For a moment after the report of the gun had died away upon the air there was a dead silence; but as the smoke arose from the surface of the water there was, at first, a low murmur breaking from the lips of the men; that murmur grew louder and stronger, until it swelled to a joyous and deafening shout.

The old gunner sprang to his feet and gazed out upon the water, and the first thing that met his view was the huge carcass of the shark floating with his belly up, a mangled mass.

In a few moments the boat reached the daring swimmers, and, half dead with fright, they were brought on board.

The old man clasped his boy in his arms, and then, overcome by the powerful excitement, he leaned on the gun for support.

I have seen men in all the phases of excitement and suspense, but never have I seen three hundred human beings more overcome by thrilling emotions than on that eventful moment when they first knew the result of our gunner's shot.

SAVED FROM A LIVING TOMB.

SEVEN MINERS BURIED FOR FIVE DAYS, AND LIVING ON MULE-MEAT UNTIL RESCUED.

ON the morning of Wednesday, April 23d, a cave occurred in shaft No. 10 of the Sagur Notch Coal Mine, near Wilkesbarre, Pa., by which seven miners—five men and two boys—were imprisoned one thousand two hundred feet below the surface of the earth.

In the bottom of the basin a new gangway had been projected, and men were employed night and day in pushing it to completion, in order to open up new breasts and chambers. It was something like a mile away from the foot of the slope, but a large fan, driven by a powerful engine, displaced the gases, and from this danger, the element to coal-mining operations, there was freedom. But the shaky rock overhead filled every careful miner's heart with misgivings.

For several days and nights previous the mine sounded the alarm in unmistakable tones. It "worked heavy," the creaking sounds reverberating through the old abandoned chambers like the crackling of the dry limbs of a forest in a hurricane.

The pillars cracked and bulged out, and other premonitory symptoms were noted. On Wednesday morning the crisis came, and imprisoned, or buried beneath untold tons of weight, the devoted delvers in the black-diamond bed.

The men thus imprisoned were: William Hawkins, Edward Price, Patrick and John Green, and Barney Riley; there were, besides, John Clarke, a door-boy, and William McKinney, driver-boy. The first notice of the cave was given by James McGinty,

who, fearing there was trouble, stopped work and started to go out. On his way he noticed that there had been a fall from the roof in the east gangway which had covered the track. He was finally compelled to crawl on his hands and knees to get past. He knew that the other men were at work, but they were half a mile or more away, at a thousand feet below the surface. He saw, also, that the work of destruction was still going on, and that he could give them no warning. When the dirt first began to fall McGinty had told the driver-boys, who were then on the other side of the fall, to go at once and tell the men to come out. The boys did not return, and their fate, as well as that of the men, became a matter of fearful conjecture.

As soon as the news of the disaster became known there was intense excitement throughout the neighborhood. As soon as possible a rescuing party of one hundred men was organized, and the work begun of digging a shaft down to the gangway where the men or their dead bodies were confined. The work from that moment proceeded without intermission night and day until the morning of Monday, April 28th, when the men were reached, and fortunately found to be still living.

The day before the rescuing party succeeded in drilling a hole through to the lower part of the mine, thus showing that it was only necessary to drive a few feet further to effect an opening into the gangway.

The work was then necessarily performed slowly and more careful y, as there were indications of fire-damp, which necessitated the driving and cutting of the coal with the pick alone. The opening through the fifty-foot vein of coal was effected at eight o'clock, and Mine Superintendent Smith was the first to enter.

He found a portion of the men cooking a breakfast of mule-steaks, taken from the mule which the boy who was sent to warn the men of the impending disaster had fortunately taken with him, and which was killed on the second day of their confinement.

The remainder of the party were engaged in changing the direction of an air course. A stream of water running through the mine provided them with water. Very little was said, but the entire party used all possible dispatch in getting out of the mine, reaching the surface shortly after nine o'clock.

The crowd which had assembled was very enthusiastic, and repeatedly cheered the rescued men and their plucky deliverers. The men were then sent to their homes. They say that during Saturday and Sunday they could hear the rescuing party firing blasts, and when the blasting ceased they believed the work had been stopped, and they were abandoned to their fate. They say they could have subsisted at least two weeks longer, had it been necessary, upon their supply of jerked mule-meat.

Too much praise cannot be awarded to the brave men who accomplished the great work of driving and timbering a passageway of one thousand two hundred feet through rock, slate and coal in the space of four days and nights, to the bosses directing the work, and to the engineering skill displayed in locating and directing the openings.

The men, when released, had been confined five and a half days. They stood the long imprisonment very well. The boy, upon reaching the surface, leaped over the inclosure at the mouth of the opening and ran rapidly homeward.

It is stated that the cause of the disaster may be charged to the "robbing" of pillars. This is resorted to when a mine or working is about to be abandoned, and in all such cases the furthermost pillar is always robbed first. But in this instance, it is stated, the robbing has been going on in the rear of the men engaged in driving the heading a mile from the slope, in order to open up a new breast and chambers.

One hundred dollars was presented to each of the rescued miners by the stockholders of the Lehigh and Wilkesbarre Coal Company through President Charles Parish.

ROY, THE RANGER.

A Tale of the Mexican War.

CHAPTER XIX.

[Continued from page 254.]

So rapid were the discharges of the Mexican artillery, that no interval could be distinguished between them; but bad marksmanship prevailed amongst the gunners; the cannons were aimed too high; but for this the American batteries would have been completely swept away.

Still the action raged with a fierceness never before known in Mexican warfare. The best soldiers of the republic, most of whom had grown gray in her numerous wars, and who had formerly carried every field on which they fought, were now contending for mastery in a position chosen by themselves.

But at length the superior skill of the North Americans prevailed.

The rangers crossed the ravine, supported by the infantry with fixed bayonets.

Gradually, inch by inch, the Mexicans were driven with musket-ball and bayonet through the chaparral, and forced to take refuge in a more distant position.

Still the dread strife continued.

The ravine batteries poured on the advancing column storms of iron hail, that struck death to scores whilst on the very verge of victory.

Here the battle-scarred veterans, the Tampico Battalion, had taken their stand, and though their cannon were surrounded by the dead and dying, maintained their position with a dogged, stubborn obstinacy.

As the fate of the battle hung upon these cannons, General Taylor ordered May to charge them with his dragoons, and the rangers to follow and hold them.

May swept down the road across the ravine at the head of his troop. Roy and Toss followed with thirty rangers.

Roy was in command, as Captain Walker had been summoned by General Taylor to act as aid, his knowledge of the country rendering his services valuable at this juncture.

May led his men up to the muzzles of the cannons, and as he turned to encourage them for the charge a blast from the batteries cut down eighteen of their horses and killed seven of the dragoons, some of them being buried by the force of the balls into the very midst of the foe.

But, undismayed by this, the remainder sprang over the guns, charged through the cannoneers, and reforming, returned with resistless force.

The Mexicans were scattered, but in a few moments they rallied, and with fixed bayonets returned to the shock.

Throwing themselves furiously between their guns, they wielded their swords and bayonets hand-to-hand with the cavalry.

It was at this critical moment that Roy came up with his rangers.

They quickly decided the struggle.

One by one the Mexicans sank beneath their superior weapons.

Yet even when their regiment was crushed and broken, their ensign endeavored to sustain its honor by wrapping its flag about him to bear it away.

Roy saw the act, and intercepted the ensign's flight.

Grimly the Mexican confronted Roy, as if scorning this stripling of a foe; but he underrated the skill and strength of that nervous arm.

A few passes with the sword and the Mexican sank wounded to the ground, and Roy took possession of the flag.

At the same moment General La Vega, the Mexican commander, surrendered his sword to Colonel May. This ended the fight over the cannon.

Those of the Mexicans who were not killed, wounded, or taken prisoners, sought safety in flight.

Colonel May left Roy in charge of the batteries and conducted his prisoners to the wagon-train, which had been packed by General Taylor's orders at the commencement of the battle.

"Well, Toss, this looks like another victory," said Roy, as they stood by the captured cannon.

"It 'pears to me as if we were going to flax them every time," returned Toss. "These Mexicans are spunky enough, but they don't seem to know how to fight. They are not a patch on our boys."

"Indeed, they are not. Hollos! Look there! What's he about?"

Toss looked in the direction indicated by Roy, and saw a Mexican officer, in a handsome uniform, and mounted upon a fleet and well-formed horse, advancing deliberately toward their position.

"Come to reconnoitre, by Jehoshaphat!" cried Toss. "Give him his ticket for soup!" he added to his men.

A dozen of the rangers put their carbines to their shoulders and gave the advancing horseman a volley. But though the bullets appeared to rattle all round him, neither himself nor horse was hit.

The discharge of the guns, however, had the effect of making him wheel about and ride back from whence he came.

"Missed him, by Jehoshaphat!" exclaimed Toss; "but I guess he is satisfied with the look he had at us, and our intimation that he was not wanted here."

"No, he's not!" cried Roy, "for here he comes again."

The Mexican came forward again, and nearer than before, as if courting the death-shot.

Toss took a deliberate aim at him.

"I'll fix his flint this time!" he cried, and pulled the trigger.

Just as he did so Roy, who had been keenly watching the officer, struck up the barrel of the carbine.

The bullet flew up and struck the Mexican upon the top of his helmet, breaking the strap that confined it under his chin, and throwing it back upon his neck; but he caught it with a rapid movement of his right hand, and prevented it from falling to the ground.

"Why did you do that!" demanded Toss, surprisedly.

"Look!" answered Roy, in a startled manner, pointing to the Mexican.

"Great Jehoshaphat!" ejaculated Toss.

The displacement of the helmet had revealed a fair face and a shapely head, around which the golden hair was coiled like a coronal.

"It is Zelis!"

"Mrs. Bellingham? Oh! what won't that woman do next?"

The view afforded of this strange head, with its radiant hair, was but momentary. The helmet was quickly replaced, and the daring rider wheeled and galloped swiftly away.

Roy gazed after her with distended eyeballs, whilst Toss rested his hands upon the muzzle of the carbine with a ludicrous expression of bewilderment upon his sharp features.

"Heaven and earth! what new freak is this crazy woman playing now?" cried Roy.

"I read the story of 'Fanny Campbell, the Female Pirate Captain,' with a picture of her in her

SAVED FROM A LIVING TOMB.—RESCUE OF SEVEN MEN WHO HAD BEEN BURIED FIVE DAYS BY THE CAVING-IN OF A COAL MINE, NEAR WILKESBARRE, PA.— SEE PAGE 267.

ROY THE RANGER.—"THE BULLET FLEW UP AND STRUCK THE MEXICAN UPON THE TOP OF HIS HELMET, BREAKING THE STRAP THAT CONFINED IT UNDER HIS CHIN, AND THROWING IT BACK UPON HIS NECK."

regimentals, on the cover, when I was a boy, and I didn't believe it," answered Toss; "but I do now. She's a gay old gal, this Mrs. Bellingham, isn't she? She looked splendid in that uniform. But I would have bored a hole through it if it hadn't been for you. I'd have made it a masquerade ball for her."

"It is well for her that I thought I saw something familiar in her face, and struck up your arm."

"She would have dropped like a partridge if you hadn't. She would have been past praying for by this time. You just saved her life."

"So much the better!"

Toss shook his head gravely.

"It may be better for her, but I am not so sure but what it would have been better for you if you had let it go the other way," he replied.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Roy, somewhat testily; his impatience showing that he understood the significance of Toss's words.

"Oh! you know well enough. I can see as far into a millstone as my neighbors. This woman is bound to make trouble for you as long as she lives. I know why she's gallivanting through this country. It is be-au-e—"

"Hush! that's enough; the men are listening. Respect and pity her weakness, as I do."

"All right. You're too tender-hearted. That's your weak point. Here, Blake, here's your carbine."

"Load up, boys!" commanded Roy. "I have an idea there's mischief in the wind."

"Of course there is!" added Toss, dryly. "There's always mischief when a woman is about. I've heard of women wearing the breeches, but I never saw one in full regimentals before."

"By heaven! here they come!" cried Roy; "our old friends, the lancers! There she is again, Toss! Men, spare that officer, take her—him, I mean—alive. Capture him, by all means."

"Take care she don't capture us; there's five hundred of them!" exclaimed Toss. "We can't stand here."

"No, no! quick, men; fall back on the chaparral there!" commanded Roy. "Give them a volley, and then break for the trees."

A mass of horsemen, composed of lancers, rancheros and bandits, charged furiously upon the rangers, but their numbers were not so large as Toss had represented, being but about two hundred.

Zelia, in her gay uniform, led the charge, supported by Tom Hartnett, Ned Graghty and Estevan.

The rangers gave them a withering volley, but could not stop their headlong charge. Roy's instructions saved his men from utter annihilation.

Five of the rangers were lanced before they gained the shelter of the chaparral, and the most strenuous exertions were made to capture Roy, and but for the arrival of May and his dragoons he would doubtless have been made a prisoner.

Toss was struck down at his side—his pistols were empty—at a cost of two lives to the foe, and he was standing astride of his fallen friend, defending himself with his sword, when the loud cheer of the dragoons proclaimed their coming.

The lancers broke before their charge like leaves before a whirlwind, and the tide of battle swept away from Roy.

He raised Toss up, and was delighted to find that he was not seriously injured. He had been stunned by the blow of a sword on the head; but it had been turned by his hat in such a manner that he received the flat of it, and not the edge.

"How do you feel?" inquired Roy.

"As if a jackass had kicked me," answered Toss, rubbing his head, ruefully. "We had a narrow squeak of it that time."

"Yes; but we are good enough for the next."

"Perhaps we are; but the pitcher that goes too often to the well——"

"The proverb is somewhat musty," quoted Roy, laughingly.

"But it's true. Age improves it, like wine. If you'd only let me have shot that she devil now!"

"Pshaw! you are prejudiced." Roy looked at the fugitives and their pursuers disappearing in the distance. "I wonder what has become of her. The route is complete. She may perish in this terrible flight."

"Let her perish!" cried Toss, rubbing his head again. "I can thank her for this bump on my head. I never saw so many stars before by daylight."

CHAPTER XX.

ANOTHER EXPEDITION.

THIS charge of the lancers on Roy's command was the last triumph of the foe. From this last effort their rout began, and soon masses of infantry, dragoons, and rancheros were breaking through the chaparral, and rushing toward the Rio Grande.

The tide of battle and defeat swept close to the beleaguered fort, whose siege and spirited defense I have already narrated, and as the fugitives came within range of its guns, it opened fire upon them, sending showers of grape to second the discharges from the main army.

"What's the next move?" inquired Toss.

"We must go back to our horses, mount, and join the pursuit," answered Roy.

He led the rangers back to where their horses had been left, and they quickly mounted and rode toward the fort.

On the way he met Captain Walker, who directed him to take ten men with him and apprise Captain Hawkins of their victory.

Thus it was that the first officer of the victorious army that Captain Hawkins saw was Roy Bellingham.

Together they stood upon the parapet of the fort and watched the defeated Mexican army break through the chaparral and cross the river, the soldiers treading each other down as they hurried on to gain the river bank.

Terror and eager haste were depicted in the countenances of the fugitives, as they poured onward to the shore.

All distinction of rank was lost in the common sense of extreme danger. The terrible Americans of the North were in the rear, the city of refuge in front.

Then Matamoras rang with a cry such as she had never heard before—a loud wail of misery and despair.

Only one little fish-boat lay near the shore; but into this crowds of the soldiers hurried, pushing each other off, or falling headlong from the banks to a watery grave.

Mules, loaded with wounded and dying, were plunged in, and numbers were precipitated from the shore.

It was an awful scene.

Horse trampled over horse, crushing their riders to the earth, and trailing their bridles and furniture along the ground.

The river was foaming with life, while plunge after plunge announced the sad fate of numbers more.

The shouts of officers, curses of soldiery, yells of the wounded, and shrieks of the drowning, were appalling. Wretched beings grasped the flat-boat in agony, only to be murdered by those upon it; and scores of mules, and hundreds of soldiers, clinched in each other's embrace, sunk to a watery grave.

Roy turned away heart-sick from this ghastly spectacle. It tarnished the glory of war in his eyes, and made him think that men were created for something better than this dread trade of carnage.

He sought Toss in the quarters they occupied in the fort. He found him with his head bandaged, and consoling himself with a glass of whisky-and-water and a pipe.

"So, Toss, my boy, you are trying to make yourself comfortable?" cried Roy.

"You bet I am! There's nothing like it! Always take all the comfort you can, when you can, wherever you can, for soldiering is a mighty uncertain business, and there's no telling how soon you may have to shut up shop," replied Toss, in his characteristic fashion.

Roy laughed, and sat down on another camp-stool.

"Got another pipe, Toss?" he asked.

"Yes, or some cigars, if you prefer them."

"I do, decidedly."

"Yes, they are more aristocratical; but, as I am a poor, but honest, young man, with democratical principles, I prefer a pipe."

"Take your choice."

Toss handed Roy a handsome cigar-case, well filled.

Roy received it surprisedly.

"Why, where in the world did you get this?" he inquired. "I never saw it before."

"Spoils of war, my boy. I saw a defunct Mexican, in a splendid uniform, lying by the roadside, as we were going back for our horses, and, thinking he might have some cigars about him—you know what smokers these Mexicans are!—I instituted a search with satisfactory results, as that cigar-case proves. I confiscated it. To the victor belong the spoils. Try one of the weeds; you will find them good."

Roy selected a cigar from the case and gave it back to Toss.

"Poor fellow," he said; "perhaps that case was a present from his sweetheart. She may be waiting his return now in yonder city. Ah! there will be bitter tears shed by bright eyes in Matamoras to-morrow."

"Don't you wish you were there to console them? I think you could dry the wettest pair of eyes, bright or otherwise, that ever glistened in a señorita's head."

"I have been thinking of crossing the river and entering Matamoras at dark."

Toss started at this.

"The deuce you have?" he cried, surprisedly.

"I have."

"You're joking."

"No, I am not. I'm perfectly serious about it. There are plenty of Mexican deserters here in the fort who will lend me a dress. That is all that is necessary. There's not the slightest danger in the undertaking, for the city is crowded with fugitives and stragglers, and I know enough Spanish to pass myself off for a native, if any questions should be asked me."

"But what is your object in going to-night? General Taylor will undoubtedly take possession of the city either to-morrow or the next day. It can't possibly hold out against us."

"I have a strong object in going."

Toss nodded his head sagely.

"I see—Mrs. Bellingham?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You wish to find her?"

"Yes; and I have every reason to believe that she is still there—still masquerading in that insane manner we witnessed."

"Let her masquerade; I shouldn't trouble myself about her, if I were you."

"I must, Toss. I feel it my duty to find this erratic woman, reason with her, and persuade her to go home."

"Oh! oh! o—h! Roy! reason and persuade a woman? Oh, my boy! how little you know of that perverse sex. Why, you might as well attempt to reason with a mule attached to a baggage-wagon. Didn't I try to reason with my sister Milly, and what kind of a flat did I make of it? Reason be blowed! If I had a stepmother like Mrs. Bellingham, she might go to the devil and shake herself, for all I'd care!"

After uttering these vigorous remarks, Toss put his stem-pipe in his mouth again and puffed away energetically to restore the fading fire in its bowl. Roy was not convinced by them, however, notwithstanding their vigor.

"The idea of visiting Matamoras to-night, disguised as a Mexican, has taken a strong possession of my mind," he replied; "and its feasibility makes it attractive. I shall go. If I succeed in finding Zelia, I may persuade her to return with me, for she must now be convinced that the Mexicans are destined to be defeated in this war. If I fail in this, I shall at least be able to gather some information that will be valuable to General Taylor in directing the further movements of the army."

"Yes, but you may be caught, and shot as a spy."

Roy shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"I'll risk that," he rejoined.

"I never saw you when you were not willing to risk something. Well, we'll go," he added, resignedly.

"We?"

"Yes; don't you want me along?"

"Well, no, I was not calculating on your company."

Toss looked surprised.

"You intend to go alone?" he cried.

"Such was my idea. You need a good night's rest after the thump you got on your head to-day."

"It does ache like blazes, that's a fact!"

"And I see no occasion for you to go. If there is any peril in the undertaking, I had better meet it alone."

"I hate to have you go alone, my boy. If anything should happen to you I should feel bad, because I should always think I might have helped you if I had been with you. I guess I had better go."

"No," replied Roy, decidedly. "You are not in a fit condition to go. You must rest, or your head will be worse to-morrow."

"Here's Captain Walker!" exclaimed Toss, as that officer suddenly made his appearance. "Let's ask his advice upon the subject."

"We will."

"Hollos! you two appear to be having a treat," cried Walker, looking at the table at which they were seated. "Whisky and cigars? Your commissary department is well supplied."

"Help yourself, captain," said Toss.

"Thank you, I will."

The captain drank a glass of whisky, lit a cigar, pulled out a camp-stool, and seated himself in a comfortable position, with his back against the wall. He took a few puffs until his cigar was well lighted, and then addressed himself to Roy.

"The flag you captured has been sent to Washington. You have gained glory enough for one day, my boy. General Taylor speaks in the highest terms of you. By-the-way, General Worth is coming back to take his old command; he had a little difficulty with Twiggs about precedence of rank, and resigned, but that has been settled. How would you like an appointment on his staff, Roy?"

"It would just suit me—but I am loath to leave the boys."

"And I am loath to have you go; but, then, it would be a good thing for you, and you could always join us again when you liked. Well, think it over."

"I will."

They smoked in silence a few moments.

"Where did you get these cigars, Toss? They are prime Havanas," Walker resumed.

Toss explained how they came into his possession.

"I thought so!" cried Walker, laughingly. "Cute fellows, you Yankees are! I never should have thought of such a trick as that."

"We always look out for the main chance," rejoined Toss.

"So I've heard. I've been told that a Yankee's soul lies in his breeches pocket."

"I guess the lies are more in the story than the breeches pocket."

Walker and Roy laughed at this.

"I don't know about that," continued Walker; "but I've heard that if a Yankee faints away, the best plan to bring him to is to try and pick his pocket. How's that?"

"I don't know," replied Toss. "The Yankees where Roy and I came from are not in the habit of fainting away. We were raised in sight of the Bunker Hill Monument, and we have fished for flounders off Long Wharf, in the very waters where our forefathers mixed the British tea."

"And did you catch any?"

"You bet we did."

"You'll do, Toss. I would like to have a few more like you in my command."

This praise mollified Toss.

TALES WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—TRAVELING MERCHANT VISITING A NEW TOWN.
SEE PAGE 270.

"Take another nip of whisky, cap," he said, graciously.

"Thank you. You didn't find this in a Mexican's pocket?" inquired Walker, as he poured out the fluid.

"Not much. That's commissary."

"I thought so. Monongahela—forty cents a gallon. I prefer the Mexican *aguardiente*; but this will do when you can't get any better."

"That's what I thought. Drink hearty. I guess it won't fetch you—your head is tolerably strong."

"So is yours, or we might have missed you out of our mess about this time. These fellows charged you like a thunderbolt. You got out of the scrape better than I thought you would. The officer who led the charge was a perfect dare-devil."

"That officer was a woman!" said Roy.

Walker turned a surprised glance upon him.

"The deuce you say!" he ejaculated.

"Zella Bellingham!"

"Your stepmother?"

"Yes."

"Why, what kind of a woman is she?"

"A strange one!" answered Roy, with a smile. "A woman who can ride a horse like a man, hit the centre of the target five times out of six with a pistol-bullet, and can handle a sword with a skill equal to any own."

"And you're no slouch," added Toss.

"Indeed he is not," said Walker. "How came this woman to acquire these manly accomplishments?"

"I am responsible for that."

"You! How was that?"

Roy explained how he had gratified Zelia's wishes in this respect, and, although he concealed it as much as possible, he could not help disclosing the motive of these singular acquirements.

Walker was much impressed by this narration.

"A strange woman!" he cried.

"A crazy one!" exclaimed Roy.

"Mad as a March hare!" added Toss.

"Did she escape from the field unwounded?" asked Walker.

"I think she did, and that she is now in Matamoras," answered Roy; "and I was debating with Toss, just as you came in, the propriety of going across the river to-night and looking her up."

"What was your idea? In disguise, of course."

Roy explained his purpose fully, and Walker nodded his head approvingly.

"Nothing could be easier," he said. "I can get you a Mexican dress—we can strip one of the prisoners who have died of their wounds since they were brought into the fort. The trade of this city is all in the hands of foreigners—Scotch, English, Irish and French—you'll never be suspected."

"I can speak Spanish."

"So much the better. It's a capital idea, Roy. I believe I have before remarked that your ideas are always good; for you can gain important information for us if you fail in finding the lady."

"That is what I thought."

"By George! I would like to go along with you, but I can't; I must have some sleep to-night. Do you take Toss along?"

"No; I thought I had better leave him here and give him a chance to recover from the effects of his broken head. I think I can manage this affair better alone."

"Perhaps you can. I will help you all I can. I will get a Mexican dress for you, with a *serape* and a *sombrero*, and you had better send a couple of your men to hunt you up a boat. That will be the chief difficulty in the way, for boats are very scarce on the river. You had better take these two men with you, thoroughly armed, and let them wait for you in the boat while you enter the city. You can cross the river above the city, and leave the boat under the shadow of the bank, arranging a signal with the men so that they will know you on your return."

"A very good plan," rejoined Roy, who had listened attentively to these details.

"You will not want to prowl about the city more than an hour or so, will you?" continued Walker.

"Oh, no! an hour ought to be sufficient for the accomplishment of my purpose."

"Now, Toss, I'll try a little more of your commissary whisky, and then I must go back to General Taylor's camp."

Captain Walker arose to take his departure.

"Come with me, Roy; and let us see what we can do in the way of a Mexican rig-out," he said.

They went out together.

In the square of the fort, clustered around the flag-staff in indolent attitudes, were a number of Mexican deserters smoking cigars.

"There's a lot of the greasers, let's see what we can do with them," said Captain Walker.

They approached the group, and the Mexicans looked in a side-long manner at them out of their small, beady-like eyes.

"Say, you fellows, have any of you got a Sunday suit that he would like to sell?" questioned Walker.

They only stared at him in a bewildered fashion, and showed their white teeth beneath their drooping black mustachios.

"What are the apes grinning at?" exclaimed Walker.

"They don't understand you, I think," returned Roy. "Let me speak to them."

"Perhaps you'd better. Give them a touch in their own lingo."

Roy addressed them in Spanish, and two or three responded readily, all jabbering together.

He made his want known to them, and found that they could supply it.

Indeed, these men had just returned from a plundering expedition to the battle-field, stripping the dead of their own country without any scruples.

They were plentifully supplied with Mexican garments.

From one of them Roy obtained a *sombrero*, richly trimmed with golden fringe, and a striped *serape*, of gay colors; from another, a pair of trowsers that opened from the bottom nearly to the knee, and were trimmed with bright bell-buttons; from another, a velvet jacket, also elaborately trimmed, and a vest that matched it; and a broad silk sash of a crimson hue, its ends fringed with gold bullion lace.

These made his costume complete.

Captain Walker mounted his horse just as the sun was setting.

As Roy was bidding him adieu, Captain Hawkins approached him.

He observed the clothes that Roy held.

"What are you doing with those clothes?" he inquired. "Are you going to turn Mexican, Roy?"

"Yes, for a time," answered Roy.

"Another adventure, eh? What a boy you are! Well, how do you intend to distinguish yourself this time?"

Roy briefly explained his purpose to the captain.

"What do you think of the idea, Hawkins?" inquired Captain Walker.

"I think it is a good one."

"So do I. Ride down to the camp the first thing in the morning and report, Roy. And now I'm off. Farewell!"

Captain Walker put spurs to his horse and rode away.

Roy selected two of his trustiest men, and directed them to find him a boat.

They told him there was one belonging to the fort, an old affair, but serviceable.

Captain Hawkins, on his application to him, instantly placed it at his service.

Thus the main difficulty in the way of the expedition was overcome.

Roy went to his quarters, and dressed himself in his newly-acquired Mexican garments.

They proved to be a tolerable fit.

"How do I look, Toss?" he asked, appealing to him.

"Splendid! No one could ever tell that you were not a Mexican Fandango, to look at you!" replied Toss, enthusiastically.

Roy laughed.

"I don't think you mean a Fandango, Toss, but a Hidalgo," he said.

"What's the difference?"

"A Fandango is a dance, and a Hidalgo is a nobleman."

"Then I mean the other fellow—a *Don Caballero*. That's right; isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Good boy; go to the head."

CHAPTER XXI.

A CRY FOR HELP.

THE Mexican garments that Roy Bellingham had assumed did indeed become him most admirably.

They suited well with his long, wavy chestnut hair, his olive complexion, dark eyebrows and eyes; and his jetty mustache was also in keeping.

No one to have seen him in that garb would for a moment have doubted his Spanish origin.

The gay *serape* hung gracefully from his shoulders, and its folds concealed his trusty sword and pistols. Thus armed and equipped, Roy felt no apprehensions for the result of his expedition.

At ten o'clock he departed.

Toss went down to the river's bank to see him off. The two rangers carried their carbines, and were also provided with a brace of pistols and a large bowie-knife.

This was the usual equipment of a Texan ranger. The Mexicans knew what a terrible weapon the bowie-knife was at close quarters—knew it and dreaded it.

"It's a dark night," said Roy, glancing upward at the sky.

"So much the better for you," answered Toss. "Are you going straight across?"

"No; I shall make quite a distance up on this side, then cross, and drop down on the other."

"Take good care of yourself, old boy," Toss urged, earnestly. "I wouldn't have anything happen to you for a farm. This woman you are going after she's worth the trouble you are taking on her account. If it was a young woman, now, and you were sweet on her, it would be a different affair; but I would never worry myself about a stepmother. You would let her step out first."

"Toss, that blow you got on the head affects your brain; you don't reason with your usual humanity. I think I have a duty to perform, and I can satisfy my conscience, if I don't do anything else."

"Don't be reckless about it, my boy; don't butt your head against a stone wall with the mistaken belief that your head is the hardest! Don't make a consumed John Donkey of yourself from a sense of duty! Keep your weather-eye peeled and look out for squalls."

Roy laughed at this energetic advice.

"I'll try to," he replied.

He wrung Toss's hand fervently, stepped lightly into the boat, and the rangers pushed off from the shore, and then began to row quietly up-stream.

Toss Meade watched the boat until it disappeared in the gloomy shadows, and then returned slowly to his quarters, shaking his head in a dissatisfied manner.

"I don't like this expedition—I don't like it a bit!" he told himself. "Roy will get into some cursed scrape over there—I'm sure he will. Well, he would go. When once the gentle Roy takes an idea into his head all Halifax can't stop him. Well, I'll take a drop of whisky and try to sleep until he comes back."

Roy sat in the stern of the boat and steered it as his men rowed up the stream. When he thought they had gone a sufficient distance he headed the boat across the river.

"Gently, now, boys," he said. "Turn her about, and let her float down to that clump of trees that juts out from the bank. That appears to be a good place to land, and the boat can lie hidden by the shadow of the trees."

The men ran the boat ashore at the designated place.

"My signal will be this." Roy whistled in imitation of the call of the whip-poor-will: it was the old signal that he and Toss had used when they were boys together in Boston. "You will remember that?"

"Easily enough—it's a peculiar whistle," answered one of the rangers.

Roy stepped ashore.

"If you are attacked, push out into the stream, and do the best you can for yourselves—secure your retreat without reference to me," he said. "I expect to be back in an hour. Be cautious, and guard against surprise."

Roy climbed the bank, and walked toward the city, whose lights he could see in the distance.

[To be continued.]

"Roy the Ranger" was commenced in No. 81.

EASY LESSONS IN PHONOGRAPHY, OR SHORT-HAND.

AFFIXES.

LAST week we gave you the brief *prefixes*, or I signs for the parts of the beginning of words. Now we have the *affixes*, or the signs for the frequent ending of words. These two principles are very often required in Short-hand writing. Learn them thoroughly.

Bit or *bly* is written with a B when Bel (bl) is inconvenient.

Bleness, *Fulness*, and *Someness*, are expressed by a small circle at the end of the word.

For, *Fore*, like the prefix is expressed by Ef (f), but of course at the end.

Ing, a light dot at the end of the word.

Ings, a heavy dot at the end of the word, when not, sometimes, Ing-les.

Ingly, a heavy tick at the end, like *Bet* or *Jet*.

Lessness, a large circle at the end.

Ly-Ty-Ry, with any vowel between, by separating the initial consonant of the termination.

Ly, Lay, or El joined, or Lay disjoined.

Mental, *Mentality*, by Ment near the end.

Ology, by Jay, joined or near the rest of the word.

Self, by S, joined circle S (les); *Selves*, by s joined double circle S (ses). } Disjoined when necessary.

Ship, by Ish (downward sh) near or joined.

Soever, by Iss-Vee, joined.

Sensible, profitable, teachableness, faithfulness, irksomeness, cumbersomeness.

Therefore, wherever, trying, readings, lovingly, artlessness.

Prodigality, credibility, popularity, prosperity, completely, manly.

Regimental, instrumental, theology, tautology, himself, ourselves.

Ourowmselves, courtship, friendship, wheresoever, whensoever, whatsoever.

In like manner write: Forcible, attainable, accountable, irascible, feebleness, serviceableness, carelessness, sinfulness, keeping, doing, playing, singing, dancing, knowingly, charmingly, affectingly, pleadings, thrashings (Ther-Shay); sayings, recklessness, lawlessness, frugality, disability, gladsomeness, etc.

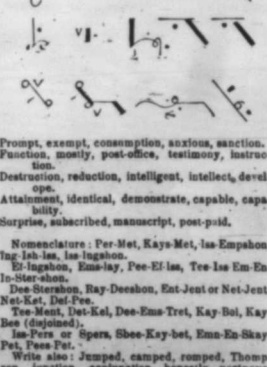
OMISSION OF CONSONANTS.

One other mode of shortening the signs for many words, is to omit one (or more) of the consonants, yet without so mutilating the outline that you cannot read it readily. In the advanced style that reporters use, a larger number of these omissions is made use of than those we give you here; but these are good examples of the process of reducing the forms for the sake of brevity.

Still retaining the vowels in the proper position, study the engraved examples, two or three words for each rule being given; then, in like manner, write out the example-words that follow. Do not forget to read the forms aloud according to the nomenclature, which we add after the cut.

The most usual omissions are Pee, Kay, and Tee. *P* is omitted when it follows M, and is followed by T, Sh, or K; *K* is omitted when it comes between *ng* and *sh*; *T*, when it occurs between the circle *S* and another consonant. If you refer to the cut, you will notice each principle applied. The other letters which you observe are omitted in the examples will speak for themselves, the most useful of which, besides the above, are *k*, *n*, *l*.

Next week we shall give you examples of words that may omit some of the vowels without danger of being misread.



Prompt, exempt, consumption, anxious, sanction.

Function, mostly, post-office, testimony, instruction.

Destruction, reduction, intelligent, intellect, develope.

Attainment, identical, demonstrate, capable, capability.

Surprise, subscribed, manuscript, post-paid.

Nomenclature: Per-Met, Kays-Met, Iss-Empshon, Tay-Ish-Iss, Iss-Ingshon.

Ef-Ingshon, Emm-lay, Pee-Ef-Iss, Tee-Iss Em-En, In-Ster-shon.

Dee-Steshon, Ray-Deeshon, Ent-Jent or Net-Jent, Net-Ket, Def-Fee.

Tee-Ment, Det-Kel, Dee-Ems-Tret, Kay-Bel, Kay-Bee (disjoined).

Iss-Pers or Spers, Shee-Kay-bet, Emn-En-Skay-Pet, Pees-Pet.

Write also: Jumped, camped, romped, Thompson, junction, conjunction, honestly, postpone, boastful, testament, construction, refraction, detraction, atonement, transact, transfer, translate, transmit, describe, proscribe, etc.

(To be continued.)

BOY SHEPHERDS IN NEBRASKA.

ONE pleasant day we rode twenty miles over the Laramie Plains, from Laramie City to the little Laramie River, where we found a prosperous sheep-raiser from Nebraska, named Edward Farrell. There were no neighbors for miles around, with the exception of a nephew of Motley, the historian, who had left his father's pleasant home near Boston, Mass., and located a sheep ranche close by here.

The Farrell's gave us a most hospitable reception. We bade them good-by late in the afternoon, and turned off to the right of Sheep Mountain, and entering the narrow plain between high ranges of hills, spurred forward our jaded animals until the gathering shadows warned us that we could proceed no further with safety.

At daybreak we spied a large flock of sheep in a corral close by a rude cabin or dugout, in which were two boys, sons of Mr. Farrell. Here, twelve miles or more from home, they had been tending a flock of two thousand three hundred sheep during the entire season. They shot their game with an old rifle, did their own cooking, and lived entirely alone with their dogs and two ponies employed in herding the sheep. They alternated in watching the sheep, which were put into the corral every night, as a protection against bears, wolves and other wild animals. An antelope which one of them had shot the day previous was suspended near the door of the cabin. There was a good range here, and the father had in the Springtime sent the sheep and the boys to possess it.

You will be surprised when I tell you that these lads, intrusted with the care of two thousand sheep, and living here in this remote, secluded spot, were only eleven and thirteen years of age. It is astonishing the early self-reliance which these frontier children display, and the skill which, as mere urchins, they attain in herding sheep.

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

TASMANIA.

TASMANIA (formerly called Van Diemen's Land) was discovered in 1642 by the Dutch navigator, Abel Janszen Tasman, who believed it to be part of the mainland of Australia. Tasman named it Van Diemen's Land after Anthony Van Diemen, the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. The first settlement was made in 1803 by a detachment of British marines in charge of a body of convicts. Risdon, on the Derwent River, was selected as the site for the penal station.

In 1804 Colonel Collins, who landed with four hundred prisoners, changed the site to the opposite side of the river, and named it Hobart Town, after Lord Hobart, then British Secretary of State for the Colonies.

In 1825 Van Diemen's Land was erected into an independent, colony. For many years the prosperity of the new colony was impaired by the depredations of "bush-rangers," or escaped convicts, and it was not until they were finally suppressed that the colony made any rapid steps on the road of civilization and progress. In 1853 the transportation of convicts ceased, and on January 4th, 1856, on the petition of the legislative council to the home government, the name of the colony was officially changed to Tasmania. It is now separated from Australia by Bass's Strait; its area is 24,330 square miles. The coast is indented by numerous bays and inlets, and good anchorage is to be found almost everywhere.

The principal harbors are Port Davey, which is much frequented by whaling vessels; Macquarie Harbor, Stanley, Emu Bay, Port Frederick, Port Dalrymple, Waterhouse Roads, George, Oyster and Spring Bays, Port Arthur, Storm Bay, Norfolk Bay and D'Entrecasteaux Channel, Port Esperance, Muscle Bay and Research Bay.

There are fifty-five islands off the coast, all of which belong to Tasmania.

Tasmania is crossed by high mountain ranges, full of glens and ravines, and separated by fertile and well-watered plains. There are two principal chains, one running parallel with the east coast, the highest peak of which is Ben Lomond, 5,010 feet, and the other forming an elevated tableland in the middle of the island, reaching an elevation of 5,096 feet in Cradle Mountain; from the latter diverge numerous smaller ranges, north, west and south. In the middle of the table land are several lakes, the largest of which are the Great Lake, Lake Sorrel, St. Clair, Arthur, Crescent and Echo.

The principal rivers are the Huon, Derwent, Coal, Spring, Davey, Gordon, Kings, Pieman, Arthur, Montague, Duck, Detention, Tuglis, Cam, Eneu, Blythe, Seven, Gawler, Forth, Mersey, Rubicon, Tamar, Piper, Severn, Trent and Ringarooma. The Tamar is a tidal river, formed by the junction of the North and South Esk.

Although much of the interior is mountainous and rugged, there are large tracts of pasture-lands and extensive forests, affording excellent timber for cabinet-work and ship-building.

The soil is very fertile, and produces abundantly all cereals, vegetables and fruits of temperate climates.

The animals are the same as those found in Australia, with the exception of the Tasmanian wolf, or native tiger, the largest carnivorous animal in Australasia, though no larger than a wolf.

Whales, both black and spermaceti, are numerous off the coast, particularly in Bass's Strait, where the fishery is prosecuted with much vigor, and seals frequent the shores and the islands in the vicinity.

The industries of Tasmania are not extensive. There are several breweries in Hobart Town, the capital of the island, where ale is made for export to the other colonies, the climate being especially adapted to malting and brewing. There are also tanneries, foundries, soap and candle manufactories, jam-boiling and fruit-preserving establishments, and two manufactories of cloth, tweed, blankets, etc.

The most important ports are Hobart Town and Launceston. Frequent communication is maintained by steamships between Sydney and Melbourne. The natives of Tasmania resembled physically those of Australia, except that their hair was woolly. They were estimated to number 3,000 to 4,000 when the island was colonized, and were very inoffensive; but from the abuse of the convict colonists a war of extermination broke out. At its close the remnant of the tribe was transported first to Flinders, then to Maria Island, and finally, in 1849, when only thirty-six remained, to the vicinity of Hobart Town, where they were established in comfortable dwellings. In 1870 only one, a woman, survived.

In 1846 nearly a third of the inhabitants were of had been convicts, and although since the cessation of transportation the proportion has gradually decreased, the moral effect is still felt.

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THE ROUND TABLE.

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ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—CHARADE.

Deep in first my second's made,
And there all greatness ends;
Yet whole's a German potentate
To whom each vassal bends.

2.—CHARADE.

In first wild Robin Hood roamed long
Defying king and second;
While whole oft used in language strong,
To anticipate is reckoned.

3.—CHARADE.

In ancient, when great machines were few,
Second third had a first wheel;
But whole, you'll think it strange and new,
Is but a name like Smith or Peel.

4.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

A consonant; an insect; a city in Switzerland; uneasy; the choice; a girl; a vowel.

5.—SQUARE WORDS.

In first there surely will be found
A very low and boggy ground;
My second is an inclosed space,
Where splendid riders daring race.

My next means to allude, you'll say,
And it does read the same each way;
A disdainful sound my fourth does mean;
In last a boy's name will be seen.

6.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Primals and finals are, I ween,
On every dining-table seen.
Shapes most various they take, 'tis true,
And in divers colors appear to you.

1. Skill, indeed, you might this call;
2. A house this is, but no ancestral hall;
3. A property of matter, whatever its condition;
4. Maidens, who in the ocean hold position;
5. In me you look for lucid explanation,
To find of river, State and town the situation.

7.—SQUARE WORDS.

A beverage; dost open; a girl's name; a plant; an article and pastry.

8.—HIDDEN TOWNS.

The sun is shining bright on all;
A glad day this will be.
Get up! Arise and man our boat;
We'll sail upon the sea.

There is no wind so rough to blow
No waves to cause us dread.
So no more slumber! linger not,
But quickly leave your bed!

Upon the sea, from each and all
A joyous shout is heard.
So pull on—do not let us stay;
We'll race the wild sea-bird!

9.—ENIGMA.

I am sold as a toy; I am hollow and soft,
Very solid and hard, in the air very oft;
Though I never insult or indulge in a frown,
Yet I'm kicked, and with very great violence thrown down.
When a battle is fought, I am there, and achieve
More sad havoc than p'r'aps you will care to believe;
Entertaining besides, I am given by night;
I am, furthermore, part of man's organ of sight;
As a sign, too, o'er shops you may also me spy
Any time in the streets as you go idling by.

10.—LOGOGRIPH.

Ye riddlers clever,
In whole will be seen
A word which doth mean
To split or to sever.

Two letters erase.
And then, I confess,
A rocky recess
You'll see in its place.

Now please change the head,
What means to rescue,
Assuredly you
Will then see instead.

This word now transpose,
If rightly, I ken,
It instantly then
An ornament shows.

If you'll not object,
These letters restore,
Then change head once more,
And to wash you'll detect.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

OLD John Walsh was a banker, and also a moneylender. He was accounted a greedy, close-fisted old chap, yet he possessed a sort of grim, rigid humor, which, in some cases, was really funny. One day a dashing, reckless young man of the period called upon him. "Mr. Walsh," said he, "I want to borrow five hundred." "For how long?" "Six months." "What security can you give me?" The young fellow drew himself proudly up. "My own personal security, sir," he replied, with a flourish. Old John turned and opened a stout iron chest by his side. "Get in here, sir," said he. The young blade looked first at the chest and then at Walsh. "What for?" said he. "Because here is where I always keep all of my personal securities."

TO THE SPELLING CLASS.

Stand up, ye spellers, now and spell.
Spell Phenakistoscope and Knell;
Or take some simple word, as Chilly,
Or Gaugeer or the Garden Lily.
To spell such words as Syllogism,
And Lachrymose and Synchronism,
And Pentateuch and Saccharine,
Apocrypha and Celandine,
Lactiferous and Cachy,
Jejune and Homeopathy
Paralysis and Chloroform,
Rhinoceros and Pachyderm,
Metempsychosis, Gherkins, Basque
Is certainly no easy task,
Kaleidoscope and Tenaceasee,
Kamtschatka and Dispensary,
Diphthong and Erysipelas,
And Etiquette and Sassafras,
Infallible and Ptyalism,
Allopathy and Rheumatism,
And Catacityam and Selvaguer,
Twelfth, Eighteenth, Rendezvous, Intriguer,
And hosts of other words are found
On English and on Classic ground.
Thus Behring Straits and Michaelmas,
Thermopylæ, Cordilleras,
Suite, Hemorrhage, Jalap and Havana,
Cinquefoil and Ipecacuanha,
And Rappahannock, Shenandoah,
And Schuylkill, and a thousand more,
Are words some prime good spellers miss
In Dictionary lands like this;
Nor need one think himself a Scroyle
If some of these his efforts foil,
Nor deem himself undone for ever
To miss the name of either river,
The Dnieper, Seine, or Guadalquivir.

DOUBLE DOSE DISGUISED.

A domestic one morning took the following prescription to a chemist in the immediate neighborhood:

"Please give the bearer a double dose of castor-oil with taste disguised."

Handing it to the chemist, she sat down to await the preparation, but was agreeably surprised to be soon asked if she would like a bottle of lemonade. Having had it, she resumed her seat, and waited for about fifteen minutes. She then ventured to remark she was afraid the folks would be ready for breakfast "if she did not go soon.

"Well," said the chemist, "what are you waiting for?"

"Why, for that prescription."

"Why, I gave it to you in that bottle of lemonade."

"Oh, lor'!" was the reply; "it was not for me. 'Twas for master."

THE following incident happened in one of the public schools of this city: *Teacher*—"Define the word 'excavate.'" *Scholar*—"It means to hollow out." *Teacher*—"Construct a sentence in which the word is properly used." *Scholar*—"The baby excavates when he gets hurt."

A CHOICE OF EVILS.—*Mamma*—"Now, Arthur, be a good boy and take your medicine, or mamma will be very angry." *Arthur* (after mature deliberation)—"I would rather mamma was very angry."

BUMPTIOUS Old Gent (in a directorial tone)—"Ah, conductor, what are we—ah!—waiting for?" *Conductor* (with unconcern)—"Waiting for the train to go on, sir." Old gent retires.

HOW TO KNOW AN ADMIRAL.—I was once in a well-filled omnibus, and something occurred which excited the wrath of an elderly gentleman who sat by the door. He took to swearing at the conductor, and at such a rate that the passengers began to think he would never leave off; he did, however, at last, and after glaring fiercely about him, he bounced out of the vehicle—stem last. There was a meek-looking old lady seated near me, and when he was gone she remarked to me in a low voice, "*I think, sir, that gentleman must have been an admiral.*" I was struck with the observation, and I now recognize its force. There is no doubt that *old admirals* are, as a body, more or less devout, and it is equally true they are addicted to—what shall I call it?—forcible language. For instance, there was my father's friend, Admiral Sir R——— K———. When I was a child he sometimes patted my head, and I stood in great awe of him. He was a most distinguished officer, and the only polished gentleman I can call to my mind who swore habitually and lustily in the society of ladies, and that, too, in the most high bred manner. Sir R———, a stanch champion for church and king, was not an old admiral of many words; "he did nay say murkle, but, oh, he damned bonny!" Then I have been told that Sir Herbert Taylor once found himself in the presence of that gallant old admiral, as well as a really good man, his Royal master, when he happened to be admonishing his tailor, who had not carried out his sartorial engagements in a satisfactory manner. "*Bless* you to *Heaven*, sir," shouted his Majesty, "and *bless* your wife, sir, and your *blest* children, and all your *blest* family," and then, having provided for all the tailor's relations, his Majesty, as the Highlander would have described it, "just stude in ta middle of ta room, and swoor at large." During which exercise Sir Herbert discreetly put his helm hard a-port and withdrew. I am sure the old lady in the omnibus was right.

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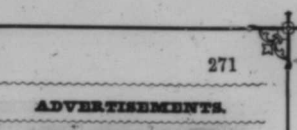

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A FIGHT WITH MEXICAN ROBBERS.

I HAD been engaged in business for some years in Mexico, and having secured enough to satisfy my ideas of wealth, resolved to return home and settle down in a quiet country place, where with genial friends I could pass my remaining days pleasantly. But to get from Mexico to Massachusetts with money is no easy matter. Many plans and arrangements had to be made. At last the day was fixed. About one o'clock in the morning all our escort, consisting of twenty-two light dragoons, well-armed and well mounted, with an exceedingly well-bred and gentlemanly young lieutenant, arrived at our door, where some good friends had stored the diligence with ample provision for the journey. We were armed to the teeth, and our principal fear was that we should shoot each other in the tumbling and jolting to which the awful state of the road was sure to subject us. The outskirts of the city of Mexico being wholly unlighted, our lamp, in passing, flashed upon some curious scenes as we passed by; but we cleared the Garita, and dashed out in the causeway in a most gallant style. Our first halt was at Ayotla, where we had to expend half an hour in waking the fresh escort, which was to carry us on, and to procure a relay of mules. The centre of the street was blocked up by a mass of carros, or long wagons, underneath which, wrapped in serapes, snored, promiscuously heaped together, the arrieros in charge; a smoldering fire just preserved embers enough to light our cigars—a luxury we appreciated, as it was bitter cold. The mules being ready before the escort, our coachman mounted the box and drove us to the other end of the village.

Here a lieutenant with a party of lancers were to meet us; but an hour was passed, and when it became certain that we could not depend on them, we again took the road, hoping to reach Rio Frio safely. We were pushing on in no small concern when a shout told us that the banditti were on us. Fortunately, our party were good stuff. Every man had been in action; and we did not intend to sit still and be robbed. We had arms and intended to use them. Dye and Halley sprang out first and made a dash at the rascals. As Dye leveled his revolver at the chief, the Mexican who had already discharged his rifle, clubbed it, but he went down with a ball through his wretched skull, and his lieutenant, rushing up, sword in hand, got the second barrel. Halley had another down on his knees and his sword pressed so sharp on the scoundrel's throat that prayers and oaths poured out in a torrent. The rest of us rushed in, and hearing the clatter of another diligence, the banditti, after a short contest, drew off, firing, but when the passengers of the new arrival saw how the fight was going on, they, too, joined in, and we gave the rascals such a volley that they fled, leaving four of their men dead and several wounded.

Mr. Dye received a severe wound; but the people living near dared not, for fear of the robbers' vengeance, give us any aid, and we had to dress his wound as best we could, and drive on.

ERNEST MORRIS.

REAPPEARANCE OF THE YOUNG SOUTH AMERICAN TRAVELER—HIS LATEST VOYAGE UP THE AMAZON—WHAT HE SAW, AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES HE SAW IT.

MR. ERNEST MORRIS, the young South American explorer, whose portrait appeared a year ago in our columns, with a remarkable statement of his adventures and discoveries in the southern part of this hemisphere, has just returned from a visit to the Amazon. He recently entertained the members of the Natural History Department of the Long Island Historical Society with an account of what he had seen on his last visit.

Mr. Morris began by tracing the course of the Amazon to the Rio Solimones, describing the towns along the route, the configuration of the country, and the characteristics of the Indian tribes he encountered. He told of a tribe of Indians that burned their dead in their houses, and slept double in hammocks, the dwellings being long, palm-thatched structures. While with this tribe he ate monkey, which he said was very good eating if not dished up with the head. A loong doong, or Indian dance, was graphically described. The musicians were four in number, and sat on a table, one armed with a big drum. Only one couple danced at a time, the male making motions to his partner as though drawing her in on a fishing line. Meanwhile old women were passing around a vile liquor, which by eleven o'clock generally rendered all drunk. One could wander up and down the Amazon for months and scarcely see a bird, unless it were a parrot. In four years the speaker had seen scarcely half a dozen snakes. Tigers were very few. Referring to the reports of unhealthiness of climate in Brazil, he said that Americans who went there brought all this sickness upon themselves. Wine, liquor and oranges were very cheap, and offered a temptation to new-comers too frequently unresisted. There was really no malaria on the lower Amazon. After leaving the great lakes, 850 miles from the mouth of the Amazon, according to the speaker, the channel narrowed. Then he exchanged his canoe, in which he had been traveling for four weeks, for an Amazon steamboat. These steamboats were American, and were so poor that they only made three or four miles an hour. At the Madeira, the Amazon had a width of twenty-five miles, but was full of islands. Nearly all the woods of the Amazon River were heavy, but the further up the river the traveler proceeded, and as he approached the Andes, the woods became lighter.

One thousand miles from its mouth the Amazon divided, and was called the Solimones and the Rio Negro, the latter being strictly a tributary. The waters of the Rio Negro were as black as ink. On the latter was Manos, the St. Louis of Brazil. The city was well laid out, and the streets paved. Thence the speaker set out in a canoe with four Indian paddlers. The Negro was very little known, and its banks were little settled on account of the food, there being no fish in the water. The thermometer averaged from ninety degrees to ninety-six degrees.

It strangely received all its tributaries from the east. After ascending the river forty-five miles, the speaker, by means of a connecting channel, passed to the Solimones, four weeks being consumed in the passage on account of the necessity for cutting his way through the forest.

The speaker exhibited a quantity of silk cotton which he had collected. On one bank of the Amazon, he said, the monkey was red; on the other, black. On one bank there were four species of deer; on the other, two. The Indians that inhabited the flooded forests were pale shades and colors, and were lazy. The women had to care for from ten to fifteen children. These Indians were india-rubber gatherers. Mr. Morris did not blame the Brazilians for placing a heavy duty on india-rubber; why? Because it enabled the lazy Indians to get rid of agriculture, as by gathering it for four months they could earn thirty dollars, enough to carry them through the rest of the year.

On the Upper Amazon turtle-fishing was exclusively carried on. Filling their canoes with turtle eggs, the Indians would jump upon the eggs and break them up, skimming off the oil for use. On the Rio Solimones there were no houses for miles—nothing to be seen but water, floating islands of grass and great forests. The speaker told of the failure of an expedition he expected to be connected with, and of his pushing on alone up the Rio Japura without gun or rubber coat, being determined not to return home without accomplishing something.

Living, in Brazil, was very cheap. Along the Amazon it only cost twenty-five cents a day. In one thousand nine hundred miles Mr. Morris said he did not believe the whole number of people living along the river, including the Indians, was over thirty thousand. The speaker concluded by describing his return to Para, and said that in the hope of interesting his audience he had simply given a narrative of his trip, avoiding a description of the fauna and flora of Brazil.

The speaker's attention being called to an omission to describe the poisoned arrows used by the Indians at the Rio Japura, he exhibited a seven-foot long blowgun, through which the natives darted poisoned arrows, throwing them as far as one hundred feet and bringing down birds. He added that he hoped to return to South America in August.

On motion of Mr. Lewis, a vote of thanks was tendered the young traveler.

TOMATOES FIRST EATEN IN AMERICA.

IT is a Newport tradition that tomatoes were first eaten in the northern part of this country in about 1823, in a house still standing on the corner of Corne and Mill Streets. About that time there came there an eccentric Italian painter, Michele Felice Corne. He bought a stable on the street now called for him, fashioned it into a dwelling-house, and there lived and died. Previous to his coming, and long after, tomatoes, then called "love-apples," were thought to be poisonous. A gentleman told us recently that in 1819 he brought them from South Carolina and planted them in his yard, where they were looked upon as curiosities, and prized for their beauty. Later, however, they became a very unpleasant missile in the hands of the small boy.

A charming old lady also told the writer that in 1824 she was sitting with a sick person, when some one brought the invalid as a tempting delicacy some tomatoes.

"Would you poison her?" was the exclamation of the astonished attendants.

And yet Corne, in his section of the town, had been serving them for a year previous. As late as 1853 they were regarded as poisonous throughout Connecticut. Corne lived between the time of his coming to America and his setting in Newport in Salem and in Boston, and, though Newporters cling to the tradition that tomatoes were first eaten there, he may have introduced them as a vegetable in either or both of those cities. He prided himself on having set the fashion of eating them in Newport.

"There," he said, "is that potato; he grows in the dark or in the damp cellar, with his pale, lank roots; he has no flavor; he lives under ground. But the tomato, he grows in sunshine; he has fine rosy color, an exquisite flavor; he is put in the soup, and you relish him."

THE SHIN BONE.

THERE is no part of the human frame so sensitive as that small bone which runs from the knee-joint to the ankle, and known in the classic lore of physiology as the shin bone. It has always been a wonder to us why that particular bone was not permitted to grow out of the top of the cranium, so as to be out of the way. As at present arranged, it is just in the place where it can be hit most frequently. If a boy, in the innocence of his youthful heart, is toying with a bat, it is sure, at some time or other in the play, to land on that sensitive spot, and tempt you to use language which is reserved for grand occasions only. If you are walking quietly down the street, and happen to tread on a barrel-hoop, the further side of the hoop is sure to rise up and catch you just there. If you are groping about the room at two o'clock in the morning, in order to strike a light because the baby has just been attacked by fourteen fatal ailments, the sharp corner of the rocking-chair, as though it had been lying in ambush for just such an occasion, takes you right on the sharp corner of that ossification, and makes you feel for a single brief moment as though a dozen earthquakes and volcanoes *ad libitum* had been let loose. Of course, it is all right, and that delectable bone is undoubtedly in the proper place; still, the problem looks rather curious when you examine it closely. And what is true of the human frame is true generally of animals. No dog will stand a blow across the shins. If a fierce dog springs at a person, and the man or boy attacked has a stick in his hand, his first impulse is to strike the animal on the head. Now this is utterly useless, as the skull bones are framed for great strength, and the blow does not check the brute at all. But if the blow is dealt across its shins, it will run off yelping; the fiercest hound cannot stand a well-delivered crack over that sensitive part.

A FIGHT WITH MEXICAN ROBBERS.—MEXICAN BANDITTI ATTACKING TRAVELERS.

ON PREPARING BUTTERFLIES FOR THE CABINET.—Any perfect insects which we bring home alive, or those which are bred from the pupa, should be killed and pinned as soon as possible, unless we wish to breed from them. It is generally better to box all bred specimens before attempting to kill them. It is necessary to be very careful to pin all specimens exactly through the middle of the thorax, and some collectors use a lens when pinning small butterflies, for if they happen not to be pinned quite straight, we shall find it very difficult, and often impossible, to set them afterward. Insects of large or moderate size may be pinned in the hand, as already directed, but very small ones can be better pinned if laid on white blotting-paper. When chloroform, sulphuric ether, ammonia, or any other strong volatile substance has been dropped into a pill-box, it is always necessary afterward to leave the box open till the smell has entirely evaporated before using it for any other purpose. When the sun is bright and hot, the readiest way of killing an insect is to put it in a box without a lid, and press the box against the glass of a window on which the sun is shining, when the insect will speedily die.

SEA-SNAKES are not seen out of the Indian and and China seas. I have never been on the west coast of America, but have heard of their having been seen there; yet one would imagine that, from the Indian and China seas, they would extend along the tropical belt to America, and even pass the Cape of Good Hope to the Atlantic tropical belts. In the Straits of Malacca sometimes a dozen at a time are to be seen from the masthead basking on the surface. I never saw one longer than from eight to ten feet, and as thick as my arm; but a friend of mine told me he had seen them as thick as a man's thigh in Torres Straits. They were, I believe, formerly considered to be harmless; but about forty-five years ago a mate of the *Hamer* sloop was bitten by one, and died in about two hours.